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The Development of a Discourse Community:  
The Scottish Constitutional Debate 1967 – 1979.

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# The Development of a Discourse Community

## **Abstract.**

This thesis argues for an intellectual history approach to understanding the Scottish constitutional debate as a process of political and ideological change, with implications for understanding the ideological basis of current Scottish politics. It justifies and outlines a methodological approach based on the insights of Quentin Skinner and the 'Cambridge School' in the 'history of ideas'; utilises this methodology to provide an intellectual history of the Scottish constitutional debate from the Scottish National Party (SNP) victory in the 1967 Hamilton by-election to the devolution referendum of 1979; and outlines the implications of this approach for the historiography of the debate, our understanding of contemporary Scottish politics, and the development of a more historically sensitive political science. It theorises and develops a concept unique to this thesis, that of the 'discourse community', traces the substantive creation of the Scottish discourse community in the 1967-1979 period, and argues for the methodological usefulness of this concept in examining the debate as a process of intellectual/ideological change. Overall, the thesis argues that a Skinnerian intellectual history approach to the Scottish constitutional debate contributes to a fuller, more historically sensitive historiography of the period, challenging current historiographical understanding of the constitutional debate and of Scottish political development; delineates the development of a Scottish discourse community between 1967–1979; and has implications for our understanding of current Scottish politics, in particular highlighting that the conceptualisation of 'left wing' Scotland is an ideological construction and suggesting a more critical approach to such perceptions of, and contemporary claims for, a post-devolution 'new politics'.



The establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 was the culmination of a decades-long debate on Scotland's constitutional position. The modern debate has conventionally been dated from 1967, when Dr Winifred Ewing won a by election at Hamilton for the Scottish National Party (SNP). The outcome of the constitutional debate was not only the establishment of Scotland's new devolved institutions, but also the intellectual environment under which the structures of the Scottish Parliament and Executive were designed and the political culture within which these bodies would, at least initially, operate. Rather than being gifted to historians as a research topic, therefore, the Scottish constitutional debate should be of continuing interest to political scientists. A full comprehension of current Scottish politics requires an appreciation of these underlying intellectual foundations and this requires an understanding of their development through the Scottish constitutional debate.

This thesis argues for the importance of examining the ideological developments of the Scottish constitutional debate, illustrating this through an examination of the early part of the Scottish debate from Hamilton until the first Scottish devolution referendum of 1979.<sup>1</sup> The role, use and development of ideas has been hitherto undervalued within existing literature on the constitutional debate. This thesis seeks to rectify this omission, to illustrate the importance of addressing this absence for a fuller understanding of the dynamics of the

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<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the thesis's focus on the 1967-1979 period flow from the methodology adopted, and are discussed later in this introduction.

debate, and to suggest the potential benefits of such an historical examination of the debate and its ideological development for our conceptualisation of current Scottish politics. To this end, the thesis argues for the usefulness of an approach based on the methodological insights of the Cambridge School developed within the 'history of ideas'.

### **§1. An Ideological Debate.**

'Ideology' is utilised here in its 'original meaning', outlined by Baker as, "the study of the processes through which the world of phenomenon is given order and signification" (1990, p.16). These processes consist of the public contestation of ideas. A key argument of this thesis is that the Scottish constitutional debate also constituted an ideological debate, that this is an ongoing discursive process, and that this has hitherto been ignored or undervalued in current accounts of the debate. The outcomes of the contestation of ideas within the Scottish constitutional debate were central to Scotland's resulting political culture. Political culture is essentially an ideological concept, incorporating the broad political beliefs and self-perception of a society. The development of a political culture is a historical process. Clearly, the development of political culture is not *solely* attributable to ideological factors, but is affected by concrete events and interactions. However, the ideas and beliefs that constitute political culture also mediate political reality, interpreting events to the political community. Therefore, while political culture is formed through a complex interaction of events and perceptions, asserting the importance of political culture necessitates greater attention to the debate as an ideological process.

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This thesis's focus is placed on the *ideological* dynamics of the debate, the role of ideas, their use and development, for three reasons: the relevance of the ideological outcome of the debate to political science, the undervaluation of these outcomes in current historiography of the period, and the importance of understanding the debate as an ideological process. Firstly, therefore, this thesis focuses on the ideological developments within the debate precisely because the ideological outcome of the debate is of continuing relevance to political science. The outcome of the contestation of ideas within the debate, such as contestations over the meaning and ownership of key concepts such as 'nation' and 'nationalism', are the focus here and constitute central elements in the development of Scottish political culture. Acknowledging the importance of the use and development of such ideas has implications for both a full contemporaneous understanding of the constitutional debate, of Scottish political development and political culture. The focus on ideology, therefore, conceptualises political culture as an ongoing process of dynamic contestation, or discourse, and the constitutional debate as the relevant discourse to study in order to better understand the development of Scottish political culture. Secondly, the focus of the thesis is on the ideological dynamics of the debate because these are frequently undervalued within current historiographical writing on that period and of the Scottish constitutional debate more generally. In response, this thesis endorses Quentin Skinner's observation that:

“...political historians tend to assign a somewhat marginal role to political ideas and principles in seeking to explain political behaviour... [if students of political ideas] were instead to think of themselves as students of ideologies, it might become possible to illustrate one crucial way in which the explanation of political behaviour depends upon the study of political ideas and principles and cannot meaningfully be conducted without reference to them” (1978a, p.xii).

There is very little *explicitly* historiographical writing on this, admittedly very recent, period of Scottish political history, and therefore ‘historiography’ is construed in this thesis quite widely. Although there is no shortage of histories of Scotland, few focus exclusively on such a short period. However, in addition, social scientific accounts often incorporate a historical overview of the debate (if often very brief and drawing on historical accounts) and frequently include assumptions about processes within the debate. Thus, the relevant historiography incorporates historical and social scientific accounts of the period, the implicit historiographical assumptions that underlie a number of social scientific examinations of Scottish politics, as well as influential but less academic accounts such as the journalistic accounts by Kemp (1993) and Marr (1995). Further, the construal of ‘historiography’ is not limited to merely historical accounts, as part of what is being considered is our *conception* of the debate’s developments. These are not formed purely by academic treatises or located in any one academic discipline. Thus, while making the case for the importance of the role of ideas in understanding the developments of the debate, this thesis’s literature review implicitly provides the beginnings of an inclusive historiography of that debate. To political science it argues for the relevance and usefulness

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of a historical approach and ideological perspective to our understanding of Scottish political development and political culture.

Within the historiographical literature, three broad ‘themes’ can be identified. These are evident in current historical accounts of the period and explicitly or implicitly underpin social scientific accounts of Scottish politics. It should be noted that while these three historiographical themes are here separated for analytical purposes, they are not mutually exclusive, and are often intertwined within accounts of the debate. This thesis argues that attention to the ideological developments of the debate challenges, modifies or adds to these accounts in valuable ways. These themes are an emphasis on socio-economic developments within the period; a description of the debate as a process of linear identity change; and a conception of the debate as illustrating that Scotland is a left wing nation.

The first theme is the prioritisation of socio-economic factors within current understandings of the period. Historians such as Devine (1999) and Finlay (1997; 2004), and social scientists such as Brown, McCrone and Paterson (1994; 1998), for example, emphasise the decline of the economic support system of the British Empire, economic dissatisfaction within the Scottish electorate, and the discovery of oil, as the key motivations of the debate. While this ‘economy’ account does not always ignore ideas or the ideological implications of these changes as such, such factors are clearly perceived as reactions to these events. For example, Paterson (1994) recognises changing conceptions of ‘autonomy’ in accordance with changing forms of Scottish governance from 1707. Forms of autonomy, he argues, “have changed as the state and society and the economy

have changed” (Paterson, 1994, p.4). These ideological changes do not seem to have any force to propel events, but are reactive to non-ideological changes in economy, society and state, certainly within Paterson’s account of our period. An examination of the debate through the documents, however, suggests that rather than reacting to economic stimuli, the issue of the economy is centralised *through* the dynamics of partisan ideological contestation. Thus, while not denying that economic factors are important within the constitutional debate, a focus on the uses and development of ideas about Scotland’s economy creates a fuller and more nuanced picture of this aspect of the debate’s development.

The second theme frequently found within accounts of the debate within this period is that the debate is conceived in terms of a process of direct, linear identity change, where a primary/primarily Scottish identity gradually displaces a Scottish-British identity. Such an understanding, again, is found in both historical accounts such as Devine (1999), and social scientific analyses of the debate as a whole, such as Brown, McCrone and Paterson (1998) or McCrone (2001). It is perhaps unsurprising that in a debate where a major part is played by a nationalist party, identity should be a central focus of analysis. In such accounts, however, these ‘identity dynamics’ are clearly secondary effects, following on from, or reacting to, events and non-ideological stimuli, most frequently those mentioned within the first theme identified above. Thus, according to Devine, “the rise of the SNP and the new centrality of the Scottish question...was based not so much on the party’s intrinsic attractiveness as on the broader context of the times” (1999, p.557). Indeed, as explanation for a much-noted heightening of Scottish identity and concomitant decline of Britishness,

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Pittock notes the perceived importance of imperial decline (2001, p.118); and McCrone (2001) links this to economic decline and the discovery of oil. Again, a focus on the use of ideas within the debate and the dynamics of this ideological discourse provides a more nuanced analysis, modifying this account. Indeed, complimenting the demonstration that the centralisation of the economy within the debate is partly explained by ideological factors, the relationship of economic change and identity change is contested, with identity an area of active contestation rather than any clear and reactive identity change.

The third historiographical theme constitutes an account of a perceived substantial difference between Scotland and England: that Scotland is more left wing (broadly conceived) than England and that the constitutional debate reflects, illustrates and/or reinforces this perceived ideological difference. This account can be seen to build on current perceptions of difference, in that quantitative surveys of identity within Scotland and the United Kingdom in recent years (for example, see Paterson et al, 1999; Denver et al, 2000) demonstrate that there is a tendency for Scots to identify with left wing values, although this is not in sharp distinction to social attitudes in England which also tend to be generally left-leaning (see, for example, Paterson et al, 1999, p.129). However, this perception of difference in recent years is also associated with an account of the constitutional debate. Thus, a number of historical accounts suggest that this ideological distinctiveness is the case through the debate, and this perception also appears to be implicit in some social scientific writing on the debate. For example, Foster (2001) gives an extreme version of this in his historical account of the period, which notably highlights the significance of Scottish left wing forces in motivating the debate - at the expense,

indeed, of the SNP, which is relegated to a minor part. In social scientific accounts, such as that by Brown, McCrone and Paterson (1998), similar assumptions can be identified. Thus, Brown et al suggest that SNP success in the 1970s but poor performance in 1979, was due to:

“... a more important feature of the SNP’s success than constitutional politics directly. The SNP was, and is, an essentially social democratic party, just like the Labour and Liberal Parties. The votes for the SNP were as much votes for continuing the social democratic project in Scotland as they were a preference for a particular form of Scottish Parliament. When it looked as if the Labour Government could continue to deliver that project, the SNP waned” (1998, p.21).

Thus, “the rise and...weakening of the SNP can be interpreted as the same phenomenon as the steady decline of the Scottish Conservatives...a continuing preference for the welfare state” (Brown et al, 1998, p.21). This identification of the constitutional debate as essentially a left-right debate over support for the welfare state assumes, therefore, that “there is enough in Scottish political history to lend credibility to the idea that the country is, at least, left-of-centre” (Brown et al, 1998, p.153), and superimposes ideological difference over national difference. However, accounting for the debate as essentially a defence of social democratic values projects back historically an association of social democracy and Scottish identity that was, rather, developed in this period within the discourse community. This is not to deny that, as Pittock argues, “[t]he post-1979 Left have reclaimed nationalism as their own, re-finding earlier traditions and intertwining the



politics of self-government and solidarity” (2001, p.19); or that, as Hearn argues, “left nationalism has had some success in achieving hegemony in Scotland” (2000, p.89). Rather, this thesis highlights the creation of what would become, post-1979, the dominant conception of Scotland’s political identity; illustrates how and why that conception of Scotland was created in the way that it was; and traces the historical origins of this conception to the pre-1979 period, located within a specific subset of the constitutional debate within which the creation of a ‘discourse community’ is observable.

Thus, this thesis argues that examining the role of ideas contributes to and modifies these common historiographical themes. Through a reconstruction of the ideological debate, this thesis demonstrates the role of the debate as an ideological discourse in foregrounding economic and social events within the political debate and the active contestation over ‘identity’ evident throughout the documents. In terms of the conception of Scotland as a ‘left wing’ nation, it is the contention of this thesis that one important outcome of the ideological discourse of the Scottish constitutional debate within this period is to create an ideological consensus amongst a group of interlocutors which forms the basis of a conception of Scotland as a left wing nation which becomes the dominant conception post-1979.

Thus, the relevance of the ideological outcomes of the Scottish constitutional debate to political science, and the underestimation of the role of ideas and ideological development within the current historiography of the debate, constitute the first two reasons for this thesis’s focus on the debate’s ideological dynamics. The role of the debate as both an

*ideological* and discursive historical *process* constitutes the third reason for focusing upon the debate's ideological dynamics. Political cultures often include shared notions of the historical. Without recognising the extent to which the Scottish constitutional debate was also a process of ideological development and construction, including the construction of an understanding of the debate itself, there is a danger that the outcomes of the debate are seen as essential elements of Scottish political culture, and therefore current distinctions may be reified back into our historical understanding of the period. In this sense, the constitutional debate can be usefully perceived as a process of potential myth creation.

Scholars of nationalism have long been aware of the importance of 'myth' and selective historical memory in generating and sustaining a sense of nationhood and national identity. Most famously in this regard, Ernest Renan defined the essential conditions for being a nation as having "...common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, to wish to do so again" (1994, p.17). However, "[f]orgetting history, or even getting history wrong [l'erreur historique], is an essential factor in the formation of a nation" (quoted in Balakrishnan, 1996, p.255). That which is highlighted and that which is downplayed in historical memory are important in defining the nation's self-perception. Such partial or incorrect 'myths' are, Schopflin notes:

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“...one of the ways in which collectivities – in this context, more especially nations – establish and determine the foundations of their own being...in this sense, myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by the community about itself. Centrally, myth is about perceptions rather than historically validated truths (in so far as these exist at all), about the ways in which communities regard certain propositions as normal and natural and others as perverse and alien. Myth creates an intellectual or cognitive monopoly in that it seeks to establish the sole way of ordering the world and defining world views” (1997, p.19).

Therefore, as Hosking and Schopflin assert, “...the beliefs a people holds about its shared fate represents one of the fundamental driving forces of modern society. National myths are crucial to understanding the world we live in” (1997, p.v). Given the perception of the role of ideas within current historiography of the Scottish constitutional debate, this ‘driving force’ of ideas is clearly undervalued.

This is not to argue, however, that recognising that the debate is an ideological discourse with outcomes that partially form the ‘cognitive monopoly’ concerning the Scottish political community’s self-perception undervalues the importance of that self-perception. Renan asserts that because historical error and myth making are so important to the nation, “...the progress of historical studies is often dangerous to a nationality” (quoted in Balakrishnan, 1996, p.255). However, this is true only to a certain extent. Myths can be ‘untrue’ (partial accounts of historical events, for example) but socially functional: members of a national collectivity can believe the ‘mythic’ version, despite being aware of

its probable falsehood or partial nature (Schopflin, 1997, p.20; McCrone, 1999, p.240). Thus, to take the most clichéd example, the kilt continues to be an integral part of Scotland's 'traditional' dress, despite its historically recent provenance (in the early eighteenth century) and its development from earlier forms of Highland clothing by a Lancashire Quaker (Trevor-Roper, 1983, p.21) being well known.<sup>2</sup> Understanding the process of myth creation may be destructive to a 'nationalist' historical *narrative*, in the sense of illustrating where certain events are highlighted, partially recounted or 'forgotten'. However, understanding this myth creation allows a fuller understanding of that nation and identity (and why and how certain events are highlighted, partially recounted or forgotten). To understand how a particular form of national self-perception was created does not indicate that this self-perception is false. To claim that this is the case rests on an untenable conception of the nation as an 'essential' essence rather than an ongoing collectively created enterprise. In this latter sense, what is important is that there is a sense of community based on shared beliefs, mythic though they may be. Therefore, understanding the process of myth creation highlights, to paraphrase Benedict Anderson, that the nation is 'invented' in the sense of created or 'imagined', rather than fabricated or falsified (1991, p.6).

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<sup>2</sup> Similarly, as Trevor-Roper notes, the differentiation of tartans by clan was unknown prior to the 1745 rebellion, only becoming common after the ban on wearing tartan, imposed after the rebellion, was lifted in 1782 (1994, pp.23-31). Nevertheless, whilst aware of this, the author of this thesis would never dream of wearing any other but the 'Stewart' tartan.

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With this in mind, an approach focusing on the role of ideas and ideological discourse highlights how a certain conception of Scotland was developed through the ideological processes of the constitutional debate. As Schopflin noted (above), myth creation develops a 'cognitive monopoly' making the outcome of the process of myth creation seem natural. Thus, if the Scottish constitutional debate is seen in this light, as an ideological process, the creation of a particular vision of Scotland and the Scots could be reified back into the past. It is one contention of this thesis that the conception of Scotland as both working class and left wing has, to a certain extent, been reified in this way. However, if the fact that the debate *was* an ideological process is not integral to our understanding of the dynamics of the debate, the ideological developments which created that national image are obscured. An appreciation of the dynamics of the debate, and particularly its ideological dynamics, is therefore imperative in understanding how Scotland's political culture was constructed.

To focus on the ideological discourse within the debate is not to argue that ideological aspects of the debate should be studied in isolation, or that other aspects of the debate should be ignored. The aim here is not to discount current historiography of the Scottish constitutional debate but to add to it. Whilst socio-economic events were clearly important, it is the contention of this thesis that, by ignoring the ideological discourse evident within the constitutional debate, current historiography misses something important and integral to a full understanding of that debate. Recognition of the role of the ideological dynamics of the constitutional debate adds to our understanding of that debate, for example by explaining why such things as the economy become important. Thus, to the extent that the Scottish constitutional debate is an ideological discourse, events, including the key social

and economic events of the period, are seen through the prism of ideological discourse as well as interacting with ideas and their use. These processes within the constitutional debate can be recovered through a careful contextual reconstruction of the debate's ideological development through the published documents of the debate and utilising the methodological insights of Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge School.

### **§2. Methodology and Sources.**

How to identify and trace the ideological developments of the debate, whilst recognising the effects of the ideological outcomes on contemporary perceptions of the debate, provides a methodological challenge. While it would, for example, be possible to interview individuals who took part in the debate, such an approach not only suffers from potential ideological biases established through the debate, but also such limitations as individual or partial memory and differential focus. However, the voluminous documents of the debate provide a valuable source through which the debate's ideological developments can be traced. A documentary analysis allows a reconstruction of the ideological context of the period and the use and development of ideas through the conscious interventions of participants. This, of course, does limit this thesis's examination to debate amongst the Scottish political elite, and there is potential for further research which would link this to movements in popular ideological perceptions. However, clearly the role of the political elite in forming public opinion is an important one. Further, the involvement of civil society in this period was limited, particularly in contrast to later periods of the Scottish constitutional debate, with the constitutional debate within the 1967-1979 period largely

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structured around the main political parties: in many ways the constitutional debate at this point was more elite led, and the concentration on the elite debates is, in this sense, an accurate reflection of the debate.

The rationale for the use of the documents from the period is clear. These documents provide a means of examining the debate as it occurred. However, the approach adopted here is not any specific form of ‘discourse analysis’, such as those outlined by Schiffrin (1994). As Brown and Yule (1983), Gee (1999), Schiffrin (1994) and Stiller (1994) make clear, ‘discourse analysis’ is a very broad descriptive category which covers a range of methodological approaches, disciplinary origins, foci, rationales and theoretical assumptions. Thus, Gee, Stiller and Brown and Yule emphasise that they are each presenting *one* way of conducting discourse analysis, rather than *the* way, as “[t]here are many different ways to do discourse analysis, each informed by different linguistic theories, frameworks, inventories of concepts and rationales for analysis” (Stiller, 1994, p.20). There is no one ‘discourse analysis’ approach which focuses on the concerns central of this thesis. Rather, the approach adopted is that of a historian seeking to recover meaning from historical documents. As the focus here is on reconstructing the *ideological* development of a Scottish constitutional debate through its published documents, the methodological insights of the ‘Cambridge School’ in the history of ideas, and particularly Quentin Skinner, are utilised. The use of these insights, the focus on the 1967-1979 period and the particular ideas highlighted within the analysis were themselves suggested by the documents, and developed through the research process.

The insights of the Cambridge School on how to historically understand texts within intellectual history was chosen as suitable for the purpose of tracing the ideological developments of the Scottish constitutional debate. The insights that emerge from the methodological writings of eminent intellectual historians within this 'school', such as Quentin Skinner and JGA Pocock, do not, as such, constitute a distinctive 'discourse analysis' approach, although certainly Skinner draws on the linguistic work of JL Austin whose work was the basis of 'speech act theory' (see Austin, 1962; Schiffrin, 1994; Searle and Vanderveken, 1985; Skinner, 1988b; 1988c; 1988e; 2002a). There are affinities with discourse analysis in the sense that discourse analysis concentrates on examining language in use in order to construct, reconstruct and transform social relations, institutions and practices: "the Discourse Analyst treats his data as a record (text) of a dynamic process in which language was used as an instrument of communication in a context, by a speaker/writer to express meanings and achieve intentions" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p.26). Rather, the insights utilised here constitute guidelines for the appropriate historical analysis of texts and their contexts. The choice of the Cambridge School approach to the analysis of the documents of the Scottish constitutional debate was made for two reasons: the origins of this approach within intellectual history and the similarity of the concerns of the Cambridge School with those of this thesis.

Firstly, the origins of this approach within the history of ideas, and its focus on the development of ideas and ideological contexts, made this approach attractive in terms of uncovering ideas and tracing their development within the texts of the Scottish constitutional debate. Secondly, the concern of the Cambridge school is not just with texts



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but with understanding texts within the practical and intellectual context of their time. In order to be understood *historically*, that is as documents with meaning at the time of their writing, this approach emphasises that texts need to be understood as intentional acts by historical agents (the author of the text); as conscious interventions within practical contexts (for example, Machiavelli writing *The Prince* in the context of events in Florence and the other Italian city states); and interventions within intellectual and linguistic contexts (for example, reinforcing or subverting the intellectual and/or linguistic conventions which govern intellectual and political debate). Thus, ideological development is perceived to be an ongoing evolutionary process involving the interaction of text and context. Indeed, using texts to examine the ideological contexts within which they were written, moving from better understanding texts towards understanding ideological change, is how this approach is increasingly being used within the history of ideas, for example by Baker (1990) in his study of the ideological origins of the French Revolution. Further, taking context into account and treating texts seriously as intentional expressions of authorial interventions within these contexts, avoids treating texts ahistorically, out of their own historical situation and important due to our concerns rather than their own - for example, avoiding such anachronistic positions as that of examining *The Republic* because it is 'the first authoritarian text', rather than for its content and meaning. Thus, one of the insights of this approach is the recognition of the potential for the ideological distortion of historical meaning, which is of concern in examining the Scottish constitutional debate. This approach, therefore, focuses on understanding the situated historical meanings of texts as their authors would recognize them at the time of writing, in the contexts within which they were written. As Skinner notes, "[m]y aspiration is not of course to perform the

impossible task of getting inside the heads of long dead thinkers; it is simply to use the ordinary techniques of historical enquiry to grasp their concepts, to follow their distinctions, to recover their beliefs and, so far as this is possible, to see things their way” (2002a, p.vii). In the same way, this thesis seeks to ‘grasp the concepts’ of the Scottish constitutional debate and trace the uses and development of these ideas.

This approach takes texts seriously as documents with something to tell us about their contexts, and which can only properly be understood from within those contexts rather than from modern and often quite different contexts. As the concern of this thesis is not with the texts themselves, but what they can tell us about the context of the debate within which they were produced, and the use and development of ideas within this debate, this approach seemed eminently suited to the purpose of this thesis. The application of this methodology here provides a contextually sensitive way of understanding the ideological developments of the Scottish constitutional debate, by enabling its reconstruction through documents that constitute conscious interventions within that debate. Skinner’s work in particular is utilised because it is the most methodologically developed of those historians associated with the Cambridge School. The Cambridge School emphasises understanding texts as historical documents within their own linguistic and practical context, rather than from modern perspectives. Skinner, developing this insight, examines texts as ‘speech acts’, conscious interventions within a discursive context, understandable by the recovery of authorial intention and the reconstruction of discursive conventions through documents. Skinner draws on Austin’s speech act theory, which identifies three aspects of language: locutionary meaning (literal meaning), perlocutionary meaning (intended effect) and

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illocutionary meaning. The last is the element that Skinner finds useful in the historical understanding of texts. Illocutionary meaning is what is done by language in use, or the ‘speech act’ performed. For example, shouting ‘fire’ upon discovering a hitherto unobserved conflagration in a public building is performing the speech act of ‘warning’, as well as communicating the observation of a fire and hopefully achieving the intended consequence of either the fire being extinguished and/or the building being safely evacuated. Skinner applies this insight to the examination of texts, arguing that it is the illocutionary meaning that enables us to rediscover authorial intention, and therefore the historical meaning, behind texts (see, for example, Skinner, 1988b). By examining texts alongside other similar texts, he argues, we can rediscover regularities, linguistic conventions or conventional ideological assumptions. The relationship of texts to these conventions enables a reconstruction of authorial intentions: at the simplest level to accept, reject or develop those conventions. The relationship of texts to their contexts, reconstructed through a range of similar documents, enables an historical understanding of those texts; conversely, through texts ideological developments in practical contexts such as the Scottish constitutional debate can be traced.

This approach, therefore, involves a close and contextually sensitive examination of texts. It examines texts as interventions in an ongoing ideological context and it emphasises the need to recover the historical meaning of texts: the ideas used and developed within them. This approach, therefore, focuses upon the kinds of concerns which motivate this thesis, and provides a concrete way of reconstructing the ideological context that this thesis is concerned with. However, adopting this approach does not mean imposing any particular

framework on the documents. Rather, a Skinnerian approach is consistent with being led by the documents themselves and seeking to understand the debate as it occurred. Indeed, seeking to understand the documents in their own terms is the cornerstone of this approach. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that there are some challenges in using this approach for our purposes. Skinnerian examinations normally cover long periods of time through which substantial linguistic change can be observed. This is perhaps understandable in that the use of language and meanings, which is central to such examinations, necessarily changes over a long period. Thus, although the adoption of this methodology is justified for the reasons outlined above, it is not to be expected that it can identify such clear transformations of language and meaning as studies such as Skinner's *The Foundations of Political Thought* (1978a; 1978b). In a period of twelve years, it is unlikely that *major* linguistic changes will have occurred analogous to, for example, the change in the meaning of the *State* between its use by Machiavelli and Weber. Nevertheless, it must also be borne in mind that the 1967-1979 period is part of a longer debate. This thesis makes claims for the importance of examining ideological developments within the debate and that this methodological approach is valuable. In this sense, the limitation of the thesis to a twelve year period provides a test of this claim, which then indicates the possibility of a larger research programme. The period covered was necessarily limited in terms both of limiting the number of documents to be analysed in a debate where there is a great deal of documentary data, and enabling coverage of the ideological developments of that period, as reconstructed from those documents, in sufficient depth to be worthwhile. It is undoubtedly the case, however, that the thesis's findings point towards a more chronologically extended research programme.

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However, the limitation to the 1967-1979 period was not made arbitrarily. There is an obvious logic to beginning with the earlier period of the debate, beginning with the Hamilton by-election which is conventionally seen by commentators of Scottish politics both then and now as the starting point of the modern Scottish constitutional debate: logically the later periods of the debate built upon the developments of this earlier period, and therefore the study of this period lays the groundwork for a more extended study. However, additionally, while examining documents from the debate *as a whole* early in the research process, it was determined that there was a sufficiently different dynamic and a significantly changed political context within this period of the debate from the later post-1979 period to justify a limitation of this thesis's focus to the 1967-1979 period. The first devolution referendum, therefore, provided both a natural cut-off point for the period to be examined, and one which was suggested by the documents themselves.

It should be emphasised that the period was not chosen in order to examine any specific substantive aspect of the debate, but to examine the debate's ideological dynamics without preconceptions. For example, a study focussing upon the conception of Scotland as a left wing nation might profitably focus on the later post-1979 period when, confronted with the Thatcher and Major Conservative governments, this conception became the dominant ideological discourse within Scotland. However, according to the methodological approach adopted here, the period was studied with a desire to trace the debate's ideological developments as historically as possible. Indeed, this increases the validity of the findings in the sense that, where the creation of a discourse community with a conception of left wing Scotland is identified, this can be textually supported and clearly emerges from the

documents rather than being projected back from current concerns. Therefore, to the extent that the findings underpin and illuminate recognizable conceptions of Scotland today, such findings illustrate the claims of the thesis concerning the historiographical effects of the debate's ideological outcomes. Further, while there is clearly a valid research motivation in understanding how the discourse of left wing Scotland achieved *dominance* in the later period, this does not invalidate an understanding of the genesis of this conception in terms of the creation of the discourse community outlined in this thesis.

Even limiting the period examined leaves a dauntingly large range of primary data available, including books, articles in periodicals and magazines, newspaper coverage and Parliamentary debates as well as television and radio reports. It was determined early in the research process that to attempt to deal with *all* of the material available would damage the ability of the thesis to give a sufficiently in-depth analysis of the ideological dynamics reconstructed. Thus, some guidelines for the selection of which documents should be examined was required. In order to narrow down this range of sources, and given Skinner's emphasis on recognising texts as *active* interventions by conscious agents within concrete contexts, the documents considered here are limited to those which can be perceived as conscious and coherent interventions within the discourse upon Scotland's constitutional position, and to those made within Scotland. This, therefore, rules out a large number of media reports, and focuses the investigation on either individual or organisation authored pamphlets, articles and books, as well as key government publications important within the debate such as, for example, the White Paper *Our Changing Democracy* (Her Majesty's Government, 1975). Further, Parliamentary debates were not included for a number of

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reasons. While debates on devolution were held and reported, this often occurred in a context where factors external to the constitutional debate intervened. Further, important events in Parliament that made an impact in Scotland *were* reflected in the documents that were considered in this thesis – for example, the magazine *Q: Question...* contained a regular Parliamentary sketch. It must be remembered that the documents selected are examined in order to reconstruct their discursive context, and therefore they reflect the key events that impacted on the discourse of which they form a part. Lastly, a more extended study in terms of the range of documents considered, as well as time period, may be beneficial and illuminating. However, the limitation of material considered here enables a more detailed study of the data considered, and justifies the claims of this thesis for the importance of an examination of the ideological developments of the debate, and the usefulness of the methodological approach adopted.

The choice of texts flows from the methodology, in that the texts were allowed to choose themselves to a certain extent. As the documents are considered as interventions within an ongoing discourse, documents were firstly included which are conventionally regarded as major texts of the debate, making a clear impact on the debate's direction, such as *The Royal Commission on the Constitution* (1974) or Gordon Brown's edited collection *The Red Paper on Scotland* (1975). Such key documents are recognised, both contemporaneously and currently, as important or connected to central events/figures. Other documents are included because they provide a detailed account of conventional arguments and positions, representing the main rhetorical divisions of the debate as uncovered through the analysis of the documents. For example, Tam Dalyell's *Devolution:*

*The End of Britain?* (1977) was included both as it was referenced within a number of documents examined, and because Dalyell himself was named in a number of documents as providing the most thought out defence of the pre-devolutionary status quo (for example, in Brown & Harvie, 1979, p.4). Additional documents were identified through cross-referencing within such documents. Thus, the sources under consideration are clearly engaged in discourse, and ideological conventions can be identified and traced. Lastly, additional sources were identified within the National Library of Scotland during the documentary analysis and used to verify the representativeness of the documents examined, and to corroborate the conventions located and ideological transformations identified. Therefore, these documents were employed both as primary and corroborative sources. Through initial use of recognised central documents, cross-referencing and validation through additional documents, it was determined that the sample of documents used from the period accurately represent the debate's transformations. Through the examination of these documents the ideological transformations of the debate were reconstructed and the creation of a 'discourse community' identified.

### §3. The 'Discourse Community'.

The concept of the discourse community constitutes one of the main original contributions of this thesis. This concept is created and developed within the thesis. It must be emphasised that it is a concept developed *through* the examination of the documents of the Scottish constitutional debate to describe what was identified as occurring within the debate as represented in the documents. It is, therefore, a research tool used to



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conceptualise the ideological transformations observed through the documents. Therefore, the concept is a concretely located one developed to describe specific ideological developments within a specific debate. Whether the concept is more generally applicable might profitably prove the basis of future research but is not an issue here. When discussing 'the development of the discourse community', the discourse community under question is that which has been identified within the Scottish constitutional debate between 1967-1979.

A discourse community is defined here as a relatively open elite community consisting of concretely identifiable individuals with shared references and conventions. The community's boundaries and content are developed and maintained through ongoing *discourse* amongst participants, delimited by their recognition of those references and conventions. Participants may not explicitly conceive of *themselves* as members of a discourse community, but they do implicitly recognise each other by engaging in discourse, employing discourse community conventions and demonstrating shared references with fellow members. The discourse community is limited and identifiable, but also a developing and developmental social institution based on shared conventions which are both affected by, and affect, the behaviour and expression of members. That it is a community created through ongoing discourse emphasises its developmental nature, historicity and specificity as an inter-subjective community. The concept of the discourse community emphasises that political discourse has effects on participants, and provides a means of connecting elites, events, perception and ideological development within a defined discursive location.

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The discourse community is relatively open in the sense that the discursive borders are not officially policed: that is, individuals may enter and leave as the discourse community develops and changes, through their interaction and acceptance of community conventions. This could be seen as a negative feature of the concept in that it is less clear than perhaps might be wished. Clearly, there are problems attributing membership in some cases: both the Conservative MP Malcolm Rifkind and Labour's JP Mackintosh MP, for example, write articles in *Q: Question...*, one of the key documents within which the discourse community is developed; and both interact with members of the discourse community. Chapter Seven asserts that neither is a discourse community 'member' due to their limited participation within this discursive forum (p.318). Clearly interaction with members of the discourse community is not enough to constitute membership: for example, Dalyell is clearly not a member although he interacts with those who are; he neither writes within what are identifiable discourse community sources nor shares those conventions which come to be definitive of that community. Rifkind and Mackintosh are certainly closer to those within the discourse community than Dalyell. It may be that in the cases of Rifkind and Mackintosh the determination of discourse community non-membership is the result of a mistaken but natural instinct emerging from the concept – that it leads one to seek clear and lasting boundaries, where the concept's fluidity is one of its valuable attributes. Taking this fluidity of the boundaries of the discourse community into account, indeed, might suggest that both Mackintosh and Rifkind could be members of the discourse community at some point in its development, for example at its initiation; but that any such membership becomes questionable as the discourse community develops ideologically, creating a more concrete sense of identification between members. Thus, in Chapter Seven,

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where the developing identifiable set of conventions which constitute the discourse community are discussed, Mackintosh and Rifkind do not constitute discourse community members through their lack of clear association with these conventions and the development of those conventions. Nevertheless, that the concept is open and developing is one of the strengths of the concepts in terms of its congruence with the methodology adopted here, and requires open-minded treatment of documentary evidence. The validity of the identification of the discourse community is strengthened when a core series of documents, a key set of members, and the development of a shared number of references and conventions can be located emerging naturally from the documentary analysis rather than from the imposition of any overly rigid universalistic concept.

The development of the discourse community, outlined in Chapter Seven, builds on the reconstruction of the ideological dynamics of the constitutional debate within the period as a whole. Thus, it is constructed across the main ideological division of the debate, that between Labour and the SNP and in particular the evaluative debate over the ownership of Scottish nationalism which is claimed by both sides of that divide. The discourse community also draws on an evaluative agreement over the democratic ideals at issue within the debate that evolves through the partisan dynamics of the debate. Lastly, the discourse builds on the centralisation of the economy, due to ideological dynamics over the central Labour/SNP rhetorical division. As the debate is shot through with partisan dynamics, even where evaluative agreement is present, so is the discourse community. Nevertheless, building upon these larger dynamics of the debate, dialogue is clearly identifiable between a common set of contributors within a defined set of sources: Brown

(ed.) (1975), *The Red Paper on Scotland*, Kennedy (ed.), (1975) *The Radical Approach: Papers for an Independent Scotland*, the publications of Jim Sillars's breakaway Scottish Labour Party and the magazines *Calgacus*, *Crann-Tara* and *Q: Question...* Within these sources, a commonality of contributors is evident and the development of a conception of Scotland as a 'working class' nation with a left wing ideological identity is demonstrated.

That such a discourse community can be identified is not to demonstrate, or to claim, that this is the dominant conception within Scottish politics by 1979. Indeed, in so far as this discourse community is evident, it is also evidently a subset of the debate, although clearly there is an interaction with the wider debate, and some of the sources implicated in the creation of the discourse community had wider influence, most notably Brown's *Red Paper on Scotland* (1975). However, demonstrating the ideological origins of this conception in this period is a valuable addition to our understanding of the debate. Further, it suggests that the origins of the conception which does *become* dominant post-1979 predate the period when it is clearly recognised as existing and is indeed the dominant view. The thesis illustrates the role of ideological construction in creating that conception. Present dominant ideologies, or political cultural self-understandings, affect how the history creating that ideological context is collectively remembered. The present conditions that which is perceived as important to understand about the past. Finlay, for example, notes increased historical research on Scottish nationalism following the success of the SNP from the 1960s, with the result that, "in spite of their lack of prominence in Scottish political developments over the last century, we know more about the nationalists than other, arguably more important, political parties and movements" (1997, p.3). This is

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problematic for a properly historical understanding of the constitutional debate. Conceptualising Scotland as a left wing nation without recognising the historical and ideological nature of this construct can obscure our understanding of both the past and the present. Further, it can lead us to take some aspects of current Scottish politics for granted and limit our choices. This is the danger of reifying, rather than understanding, outcomes, understanding the past in terms of what is now seen as important, rather than what was *historically* important, and creating a teleological narrative that reinforces current values.

The development of the discourse community affects subsequent understandings of the debate to the extent that the conception of Scotland which was created within the discourse community became dominant post-1979. Thus, current historiography often reflects the debate's ideological outcomes, rather than explaining them. This is one example of a broader problem in understanding historical developments if the role of ideas is undervalued. History is implicated with identity and political culture, and these in turn affect understandings of the past. Historians build on current concerns and identity constructions: “[h]istorians at all times, whether subconsciously or otherwise, to a greater or lesser extent always create the past in their own image” (Cowan & Finlay, 2002, p.1). An analysis proceeding from the documents, in contrast, allows them to ‘speak for themselves’ and enables a more sensitive understanding of ideological change and discourse community construction. Scottish politics is heavily informed by the ideological outcome of the constitutional debate as well as particular understandings of Scottish political history. A Skinnerian examination encourages understanding the past as a dynamic historical process and minimises the danger of reifying modern values.

**§4. Summary and Thesis Structure.**

The constitutional debate within which the discourse community was created also created the ideological context of modern Scottish politics. To understand the intellectual underpinnings of current Scottish politics, therefore, requires understanding this process of ideological development. Further, an intellectual history approach recognises the extent to which current ideological context affects historical understanding, including historical self-understanding. However, the role of ideas within the debate, and the role of the debate as an ideological as well as historical process, is often ignored or undervalued. This has implications both for our historical understanding of the debate and our understanding of the debate's outcome: current Scottish political culture. An historical examination utilising Skinnerian methodological insights to reconstruct the debate's ideological developments contributes to a fuller historiographical understanding of the debate, a greater appreciation of the ideological foundations of Scottish politics, and a more historically sensitive political science. Further, such an appreciation of the ideological construction of current Scottish political culture has the potential to enable a more critical political science: as Skinner notes, language and ideological conventions enable and disable, making some things possible/imaginable or impossible/unimaginable. Understanding the ideological foundations of present Scottish political culture may, therefore, allow a re-evaluation of aspects of Scottish politics currently unexamined or thought unexceptional. Thus:

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“[a]n understanding of the past can help us to appreciate how far the values embodied in our present way of life, and our present ways of thinking about these values, reflect a series of choices made at different times between different possible worlds. This awareness can help to liberate us from the hegemonic account of these values and how they should be interpreted and understood. Equipped with a broader sense of possibility, we can stand back from the intellectual commitments we have inherited and ask ourselves in a new spirit of inquiry what we should think of them” (Skinner, 2002a, p.6).

Chapter One outlines the methodological approach of the Cambridge School, and particularly Quentin Skinner, in some detail, arguing that this methodological approach provides a contextually sensitive way of reconstructing the ideological developments of the constitutional debate through the debate’s documents. Through these documents the development of the discourse community is traced. Chapter Two expands on the meaning and usefulness of this discourse community concept, with particular reference to the Scottish discourse community developed between 1967 and 1979. Here the inherited ideological context and the events of the period are discussed, both of which condition the development of the discourse community. Chapter Three examines current historiography of the Scottish constitutional debate in the period, and identifies the three historiographical themes outlined above. These are problematised, but their dominance explained, by the Skinnerian intellectual history provided in the succeeding documentary chapters.

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Chapter Four demonstrates that an already existing shared 'banal nationalism' (Billig, 1995) underlies and is affected by the Scottish constitutional debate, although marked by partisan rhetorical divisions. This Chapter questions contemporaneous characterisations of the debate, mirroring historiographical conceptualisation, as being a debate between 'nationalists' and 'anti-nationalists'. This conceptualisation is explained by the dynamics of partisan debate. Nevertheless, a more complex interaction of the strategic partisan debate over nationalism and banal nationalism rhetorically leads to an implicit evaluative debate over 'nationalism', broadly conceived. Scottish identity *is* affected by the debate, but as a contingent result of partisan debate and not as simplistically as the historiographical identity account suggests. Chapter Five examines the explicit debate over Scotland's constitutional position and how this is influenced by the dynamics outlined in Chapter Four. A number of democratic principles are identified as the central focus of the constitutional debate, rather than constitutional options. The documentary analysis demonstrates that through partisan interaction a measure of conventional agreement within the discourse on these democratic principles is established, although this is obscured by rhetorical and partisan divisions. Although initially political divisions are the focus of debate, as Chapter Five demonstrates, the economy increasingly becomes central, as Chapter Six outlines. However, the documentary analysis suggests that this is as much a result of the partisan dynamics illustrated in earlier chapters, than the result of any direct economic motivation and, even where the economy is the obvious focus, that economic arguments are often proxies for more straightforward political arguments. Even the discovery of North Sea oil, the most important change in Scotland's economic position within the period, merely reinforces a discursive transformation already in process.



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Chapter Seven focuses on the discourse community which is built upon the rhetorical divisions and developments examined in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The documentary analysis illustrates that the central conventions of this discourse community, particularly the conceptualisation of Scotland as a left wing and working class nation, is a contingent ideological construct *emerging* from the constitutional debate, through the development of this defined discourse community.

The conclusion outlines the implications of the thesis's findings. It reviews the implications for the historiography of the constitutional debate; secondly; outlines the implications for political science focussing on Scotland, arguing that an intellectual history account provides a contextually sensitive way of understanding Scotland's changing place within the UK 'union state'. Lastly, the conclusion outlines the benefits of the thesis's analysis in providing the basis for a clearer understanding of, and more critical approach to, aspects of contemporary Scottish politics, illuminating the intellectual foundations of devolved Scotland. It is suggested that the development of the discourse community is important in altering Scotland's ideological self-perception, providing the intellectual basis of ideological transformations in the 1980s and 1990s; cautions against taking claims about devolved Scottish politics as embodying left wing values or a 'new politics' at face value; highlights the advantages of a Skinnerian methodology in urging a more critical approach toward such claims and suggesting a more realistic approach to the assessment of the Scottish Parliament and its potentialities.

**A Skinnerian Methodology.**

**§1. Introduction.**

Scottish devolution resulted from decades of public debate concerning Scotland's constitutional position. This debate is not merely of historical interest now that a Scottish Parliament has been established, but has continuing significance. The debate was crucial in forming the political culture that underlies devolved Scotland's institutions and politics. A full understanding of modern Scottish politics, therefore, necessitates understanding these intellectual foundations, and this requires an understanding of the debate through which they were formed. Central elements of current Scottish political culture were formed in the constitutional debate within the 1967–1979 period.

A key component of the thesis's argument, however, is the contested character of the underlying intellectual foundations of politics and the creation of the 'discourse community' as an important mediating mechanism in this contestation within the Scottish context. In order to emphasise this the term 'ideology' will be used, analogous to Baker's use of ideology in his study of the "ideological origins of the French Revolution" (1990, p.14), and Armitage's similar use in his examination of *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (2000).<sup>3</sup> Baker, in delimiting the terms of his study, refuses to distinguish

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<sup>3</sup> References appear directly after quotes, unless the reference covers further material in which case the reference appears at the end of the sentence. Where contractions are used for reference purposes these are

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between the 'ideological' and 'intellectual' origins of the French Revolution. As he outlines, 'ideology' in its original meaning was "the study of the process through which the world of phenomena is given order and meaning through signification" (1990, p.16). This equates to what he views as the subject area of intellectual history: "'intellection'...from a Latin root that implies 'perceiving, discerning, understanding, meaning sense, signification'. In a word it is a history of meaning", and "meaning is a dimension of all social action" (Baker, 1990, p.13). However, Baker does maintain some distinction, recognising that 'ideology' generally involves "some notion of contested meaning" (1990, p.17). Armitage similarly describes his examination of the "ways in which the constitutive elements of various conceptions of the British Empire arose in the competitive context of political argument" (2000, p.5) as ideological because:

"[t]his conception was challenged even at the moment that it emerged. It was therefore originally an ideology, not an identity; that is it was a contribution to political argument, and not a normative self-conception. It may have become an identity later, but that should not obscure its beginnings in political ideology" (2000, p.172).

Utilising 'ideology' indicates, therefore, a conceptualization of 'political culture', "the sum of the fundamental values, sentiments and knowledge that give form and substance to political processes" (Hague & Harrop, 2004, p.89), as a dynamic concept. Ideology has the

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footnoted on their first use. Where a quote contains *italics* or **bold** these are in the original, unless otherwise stated.

virtue of being able to carry the same linguistic load as political culture while emphasising its contested nature. Baker explicitly distinguishes his use of 'political culture' from that of comparative political scientists such as Almond & Verba (1989), which is "essentially social psychological...concerned with values and sentiments instilled by...socialisation" (1990, p.5). He prefers a more linguistic conception drawing partly on the Cambridge School (Baker, 1990, pp.307-8).<sup>4</sup> This thesis agrees on this more linguistic definition of ideological context, hence our use of 'societal ideology' rather than political culture, and *discourse* to describe the location within which societal ideologies exist and ideological change occurs.

This ideological underpinning to politics is a complex phenomenon, influenced by events whilst itself conditioning members' perceptions of events and political behavior. Asserting the importance of the underlying intellectual basis of politics involves accepting "certain sorts of assumptions about the importance of cultural phenomenon" (Axford et al, 1997, p.94), such as that "[m]uch of politics takes place in our heads...is shaped by our ideas, values and assumptions about how society should be organised, and our expectations, hopes and fears about government" (Heywood, 1997, p.185). One need not accept that "[p]erception may not only be more important than reality; in practical terms, perception may *be* reality" (Heywood, 1997, p.185). Nevertheless, political events affect societal ideologies and so by studying ideological change one can understand the impact of events on the self-perception of a political community. A comprehensive historical understanding

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<sup>4</sup> Baker also draws on Sahlins, Foucault's discourse analysis and Laclau and Mouffe (Baker, 1990, pp.307-8).

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of any period of political change must provide a convincing account of the associated ideological changes.

Adapting Quentin Skinner's methodological insights for studying philosophical texts provides a valuable way of studying ideological and political change within a given community. Skinnerian methodology allows examination of the discourse within which this process occurs, reconstructing and examining ideological developments through, for example, the Scottish debate's published texts. Such an analysis provides an account of the constitutional debate *as a political debate between engaged actors* within its contemporary discursive context, rather than as a historical controversy seen from a modern perspective.

As Skinner explains:

“If we approach the past with a willingness to listen, with a commitment to trying to see things their way, we can hope to prevent ourselves from becoming too readily bewitched. An understanding of the past can help us to appreciate how far *the values embodied in our present way of life, and our present ways of thinking about these values, reflect a series of choices made at different times between different possible worlds*. This awareness can help to liberate us from the hegemonic account of these values and how they should be interpreted and understood. Equipped with a broader sense of possibility, we can stand back from the intellectual commitments we have inherited and ask ourselves in a new spirit of inquiry what we should think of them” (2002a, p.6; my italics).

Implicit is a conceptualisation of the relationship of 'ideology' and politics. In Skinner's terms, past ideological change creates present ideological context, which informs how individuals understand their world, including the past ideological changes that led to these present commitments. For example, the results of choices made within the constitutional debate formed part of the development of the present ideological underpinnings of Scottish politics, including how the constitutional debate itself is understood. As Bogdanor notes, political cultures (or societal ideologies) "are determined by such factors as tradition, historical memories, motives, norms, emotions and symbols" (1991, p.447). Present societal ideologies affect how the history creating that ideological context is collectively remembered. The present conditions what is perceived as important to understand about the past. Thus, Finlay notes an abundance of historical research on Scottish nationalism since the modern rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP) from the 1960s, such that, "in spite of their lack of prominence in Scottish political developments over the last century, we know more about the nationalists than other, arguably more important, political parties and movements" (1997, p.3). Indeed, the political community's self-understanding is an account of what is important in the nation's development. This is problematic for a properly historical understanding of the constitutional debate. There is the possibility of reifying rather than understanding outcomes, understanding the past in terms of what is now seen as important, rather than what was *historically* important, and creating a teleological narrative that reinforces current values. A Skinnerian methodology, in contrast, allows understanding in a historically sensitive way, recognising that the current ideological context is historically contingent. For example, rather than accepting the

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conceptualisation of Scotland as a ‘left wing’ country, a Skinnerian examination illustrates why such understandings gain prominence.

To understand how the current ideological location emerged requires understanding specific choices made in the past by agents *in settings distinct from our own*, which illustrates different choices that were possible and allows for an understanding of choices made in their own temporal terms. As Pick notes, “intellectual history cannot be written without attention to the discourse, specific culture, implicit historiography, position of address, in and through which ideas are organised and delimited” (1989, p.22). Ideological change is, therefore, an historical process that should be understood *as* a historical process, rather than from the perspective of the results:

“[t]he aim is to see...texts as contributions to particular discourses...recognise the ways in which they followed...challenged or subverted the conventional terms of those discourses...More generally the aim is to return the specific texts we study to the precise cultural context in which they were originally formed” (Skinner, 2002a, p.125).

### **§2. The Ontological Discourse Community.**

The concept of the ‘discourse community’ is employed as an ontological tool for conceptualising and locating specific ideological changes within the Scottish constitutional debate. Chapter Two illustrates the meaning of the term more concretely with regard to the

Scottish discourse community developed between 1967 and 1979, and Chapter Three expands on the implications of the discourse community, and more generally of an intellectual history approach, for current historiography of the debate. However, something must be said here about the implied ontology. These comments are broad in scope, illustrating the potential generalisability of the concept, although to be analytically useful the concept requires application to a discrete context and has been theorised in relation to the specific context of the Scottish constitutional debate.

Ontologically, a discourse community is conceived as a discursive space or linguistic institution within which ideological commitments are developed amongst a defined group of interlocutors, who implicitly recognise each other through their development of conventions as an ongoing discursive process. The discourse community can be conceptualised as an informal institution. The *Encyclopaedia of Democratic Thought* defines informal institutions as:

“rules inherent in a culture which, although often not...written and explicitly prescribed, still standardise what is considered ‘appropriate’ or ‘normal’ behaviour. They are not based upon any explicit ‘charter’, and they may often remain unknown to participants...[as well as external consequences] they also generate internal consequences such as a sense of stability, trust, meaning, identity and agreement among those with whom we live within the same institutional setting” (Offe, 2001, p.364).



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A discourse community is an informal cultural institution that, through discourse, sets standards for a defined group. It is a community in that it is limited but through ideological contestation develops conventions through which its members interact. It has the potential to develop a sense of identity. There is a similarity, indeed, to Baker's 'linguistic' conception of political culture: "a set of discourses or symbolic practices by which...[political] claims are made", including such things as shared definitions, relative authority, and a resulting identity within a discursive boundary (1990, pp.4-5). The discourse community is a community of *discourse* as it is not static but created and maintained through continuous interaction. The discourse community is based on shared conventions that are both affected by, and affect, members' behaviour and expression. Insofar as individuals interact to reinforce shared norms, such linguistic institutions are maintained (Gee, 1999, p.1) and as such institutions are inter-subjective they are also changeable through discourse, although inter-subjectivity means that such change must be evolutionary: as Canovan notes in relation to another inter-subjective concept, "[t]he nation I belong to may be all in the mind but it is not all in my mind and I cannot alter the situation by act of will" (1996, p.55).

The concept of the discourse community emphasises that political debates have effects, not only in terms of outcomes (for example, the passage of legislation), but also upon participants. The rhetorical interaction of regularised interlocutors creates commonality and establishes parameters, conventions and tropes. In the most developed discourse communities, with a strong ideological consensus, the effect is a shared identity – as

indicated by Armitage.<sup>5</sup> A Skinnerian methodology allows this process of interaction to be reconstructed and examined, and discourse community development to be traced.

### **§3. From a History of Ideas to a History of Ideologies: The 'Cambridge School'.**

Adapting the methodological insights of the 'Cambridge School', and particularly Skinner, enables the study of ideological change by tracing ideological developments within the discourse of the Scottish constitutional debate, reconstructed through published texts, which are of continuing relevance in current Scottish politics. Therefore, although developed as a methodology within intellectual history, and contributing to a fuller historiography of the debate, this methodology also contributes to a more historically sensitive political science in relation to Scotland.

The Cambridge School approach to the study of intellectual history is associated with intellectual historians such as Skinner, JGA Pocock and Richard Tuck and political theorists such as John Dunn and James Tully. The central argument of the Cambridge School is that for a properly historical understanding of texts, they must be treated *as* historical documents. They must be located within their relevant (linguistic and practical) contexts, that is, as elements within their ideological context, in the same way that individual linguistic utterances must be understood within a linguistic structure.<sup>6</sup> Drawing on Ludwig Wittgenstein and, in the case of Skinner, JL Austin, the methodological

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<sup>5</sup> See above, p.39.

<sup>6</sup> On Cambridge School methodology see Dunn, 1968; Pocock, 1971; 1985; 1987; Skinner, 2002a; Tully (ed.), 1988.

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postulates of the Cambridge School provide a way of reconstructing these ideological/discursive contexts through documents, and analysing documents in the light of this recovered context.

This approach has illuminated our understanding of intellectual history and had beneficial effects for, amongst other disciplines and sub-disciplines, political history, political philosophy, the history of political thought and political science, as well as stimulating a considerable amount of self-reflection on the methodological underpinnings of these disciplines (see Ball et al, 1989; Pocock, 1975; 1987; Skinner, 2002a; Tully (ed.), 1988), including alerting us to the located nature of these disciplines themselves, for example within national and institutional contexts (Castiglione & Hampsher-Monk, 2001). Studies within this tradition have broadened our understanding, and prompted reassessments, of prominent 'political theorists' such as Hobbes (Skinner, 1996; 2002c; Tuck, 1993b), Locke (Dunn, 1969; Tully, 1993), Machiavelli (Bock et al, 1993; Skinner, 1981; 2000; 2002b; Viroli, 1998), More (Skinner, 1987) and Rousseau (Viroli, 1987); and raised our awareness of others either neglected or undervalued, such as Harrington (Goldie, 1987; Pocock, 1975; Scott, 1993), Guicciardini (Skinner, 1978a; 2002b; Viroli, 1995; 1998), Grotius and Pufendorf (Tuck, 1993a). Tully, for example, demonstrates that Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* is "the work...of a political actor deeply engaged in local political struggles and of a political theorist thinking within the available conceptual system and so must be studied in the light of both" (1993, p.10).

A number of texts have moved beyond contextually locating (often conventionally canonical) texts. Skinner himself extends his methodology beyond texts to examine the meaning of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's 'Buon Governo' frescoes in Siena: "Although it is obvious that these paintings do not constitute a text of political theory in the conventional sense, it is equally obvious...that they are basically intended to convey a series of political messages" (2002b, p.39). A number of authors in the 'Ideas in Contexts' series (edited by Skinner amongst others, and including works with affinity to the Cambridge School approach) focus less on central texts/authors (although most identify central texts/authors within the contexts they explore), and more on the interplay of ideas and context in determining the changing meaning of concepts and the development of ideas within concrete (as opposed to abstract) contexts. Thus, this tradition has deepened our understandings of the historicity of particular concepts and developments such as the growth of the modern state (Skinner, 1978a; 1978b; 1989); the development of traditions of natural law, civic humanism, republicanism and '*Ragion di Stato*' (Skinner 1978a; 1978b, 2002b; 2002c; Tuck, 1993a; Viroli, 1997); the emergence of concepts such as 'the British Empire' (Armitage, 2000); the 'common good' (Miller, 1994); 'degeneration' (Pick, 1987); 'luxury' (Berry, 1994); and alerted us to the political implications of such historicity. For example, Berry argues that the historical meaning of 'luxury' "is deeply implicated in the broadly political question of the nature of social order and the definition of a good society" (1994, p.199).

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This approach has also illuminated the ideological underpinnings of historical events such as the French Revolution (Baker, 1990); ‘languages’ of politics in early modern Europe (Pagden (ed.), 1987; Tuck, 1993a); and early modern Britain (Skinner, 1998; Phillipson & Skinner (eds.), 1993). Baker, whose work is most closely related to the approach of this thesis, demonstrates that:

“[t]he conceptual space in which the French Revolution was invented, the structure of meanings in relationship to which the quite disruptive actions of 1789 took on a symbolic coherence and force, was the creation of the Old Regime. If the revolutionaries came to a profound sense of the character of their actions and utterances as constituting a radical rupture, that claim too was historically constituted (and rhetorically deployed) within an existing linguistic or symbolic field” (1990, p.4).

Thus, “[t]he problem of the historian is to show how the revolutionary script was invented, taking on its power and its contradictions, from within the political culture of the absolute monarchy” (Baker, 1990, p.4). For example, by coining the phrase ‘l’ancien regime’ French revolutionaries “invented, structured and limited the Revolution, even as the revolutionaries invented – the better to destroy – the Old Regime” (Baker, 1990, p.11). Through his examination of such aspects of the French revolutionary context as pre-revolutionary public battles over the use of history, the ‘language of politics’, the emergence of public opinion as a political force, uses and meanings of ‘revolution’, concepts of representation, and ambiguity in the ‘Tennis Court Oath’, Baker argues that:

“[t]he Revolution of 1789 depended on the creation and deployment of a political language that cast many different kinds of behaviour, from aristocratic resistance to popular fears, into the same symbolic order. In order to understand the Revolution as a political - that is to say as a public - event, we need to reconstruct the field of political discourse in which it occurs, a field in which certain kinds of actions took on meanings that often went far beyond what particular actors intended” (1990, p.20).

To Baker, “the aim [of the historian] is to identify a field of political discourse, a set of linguistic patterns and relationships that defined possible actions and utterances and gave them meaning...to reconstitute the political culture within which the creation of the revolutionary language of 1789 became possible” (1990, p.24). This thesis, similarly, identifies ‘the field of political discourse’ and ‘linguistic patterns and relationships’ within the Scottish constitutional debate, and thus examines the ideological changes that occurred through that debate.

While some works focus on particular texts or ideas and others on particular contexts, the focus within all ‘Ideas and Context’ literature is the *interdependence* of texts and concrete contexts, and therefore the reconstruction of ideological contexts through texts is both possible and valuable. Baker’s work is the closest to this thesis in terms of aims and methodology, and his conception of intellectual history can be usefully employed. Denying that intellectual history is a demarcated subfield of history with a specific area of inquiry (the thought of intellectuals), he argues that intellectual history is, rather, “a mode of

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historical discourse...a way of addressing the past, a certain orientation towards history generally, rather than a separate or autonomous branch of historical scholarship” (1990, p.12). All historians seek “to reconstitute the context (or, more usually, the plurality of contexts) in which that phenomenon takes on meaning as human action” (Baker, 1990, pp.12-13). Indeed, Baker suggests that insofar as it focuses on “the intellectual dimension of social action as historically constituted”, disciplinary walls are permeable, for “intellectual history can have *no* precise boundaries with other fields” (1990, p.13).

Meaning is a feature of all social action:

“The action of a rioter in picking up a stone can no more be understood apart from the symbolic field that gives it meaning than the action of a priest in picking up a sacramental vessel. The philosopher picking up a pen is not performing a less social act than the ploughman picking up a plough, nor does the latter act lack intellectual dimensions. Action implies meaning; meaning implies cultural subjectivity; intersubjectivity implies society. All social activity has an intellectual dimension that gives it meaning, just as all intellectual activity has a social dimension that gives it point” (Baker, 1990, p.13).

Therefore, Baker argues, “untenable distinctions between ideas and events - and the artificial and sterile problems about the relationship and priority between them” (1990, p.13), can be dispensed with. This does not mean that all history is intellectual, but that intellectual history is linked to or becomes part of other disciplines. Intellectual history investigates thought (in this thesis, social and political thought), which in some cases

involves the study of texts/authors explicitly discussing social and political concepts in an academic mode; in other cases addressing the intellectual aspects of social action as constituted in everyday life and evidenced through published documents (Baker, 1990, p.14).<sup>7</sup> Through using the insights of the Cambridge School, therefore, this thesis argues that the ideological aspects of the Scottish constitutional debate can be historically ‘reconstructed’ and its development traced through published documents of the debate. This thesis does not focus on understanding a specific text or texts, although in the course of analysis some texts assume a central place; nor does it focus upon specific ideas, although consideration of specific concepts appear in the analysis. Rather, the thesis uses Cambridge School insights into the interdependence of texts and context, and a discursive conception of ideological context and its development within a ‘discourse community’, to reconstruct the ideological context of the debate and trace its ideological development. A number of ‘Ideas in Context’ authors eschew excessive methodological discussion, preferring to illustrate the usefulness of their methodology through demonstration. Thus, Berry asserts that his book is not to be read as an intervention in a methodological debate and that he does not want “the methodological tail to wag the substantive dog” (1994, p.xii); Pick, similarly, argues that his methodology’s “efficacy and its limitations should be apparent in the course of the specific historical exposition and argument” (1989, p.9). In the same way, the centrality of specific texts and ideas will become clearer through the

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<sup>7</sup> Despite Baker’s recognition of permeable disciplinary boundaries, there is use in retaining the disciplinary heading of ‘intellectual history’. As Pocock, arguing for retention of ‘history of political thought’ notes, though that discipline has moved towards a ‘history of political languages’, the traditional terminology “is familiar and conventional and serves to mobilize our energies in the right directions and...is by no means inappropriate. The activities it directs us to study are visibly those of men and women thinking” (Pocock, 1985, p.1).



documentary analysis of the Scottish constitutional debate, although Chapter Two will give an indication of the central figures and documents of the Scottish discourse community.<sup>8</sup>

The use of this methodology for examining ideological change allows a historically sensitive account of ideological change within social and political debates and enables a more historically aware political science. However, more must be said on the specifics of the thesis's methodology. Even Pick feels the need to "situate" the term 'discourse' (1989 pp.9-10) while Berry's conclusion makes points of methodological value.

### §3.1. Quentin Skinner versus 'Textualism' and 'Contextualism'.

Skinner outlines his approach in relation to 'textualist' and 'contextualist' approaches to intellectual history.<sup>9</sup> He argues for a more historically sensitive approach, identifying a number of problems afflicting these two positions which, despite both methods occasionally producing interesting research, make neither an appropriate methodology for the only appropriate object of intellectual history: the *historical* meaning of texts.<sup>10</sup> As he states, "[w]e can hardly claim to be concerned with the history of political theory, unless

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<sup>8</sup> In discourse analysis there is disagreement as to what constitutes the basic unit of discourse (See Schifffrin, 1994). Here, this basic unit of analysis is the 'text', defined as the self-contained document by a single author or authors: a political pamphlet; chapter from an edited book; the edited book itself. Of course, texts can be broken down into smaller units for analysis but the text will be judged as a whole as the documents considered constitute conscious interventions in a debate, and should be treated accordingly.

<sup>9</sup>See Skinner 1978a; 1978b; 1981; 1996; 1998; 2000; 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; Tully (ed.), 1988. On Skinner see Palonen (2003).

<sup>10</sup> Skinner does not suggest historical meaning is the 'correct' or only reading of texts and might agree with Minogue that "just as one finds aesthetic value in the Parthenon, the Sistine Chapel, and the Magic Flute (though these are also historical survivals which tell us something of that period) so we may also find philosophical value in the work of earlier writers" (1988, p.178).

we are prepared to write it as real history - that is, as a record of an actual activity and in particular as a history of ideologies” (1988d, p.99). In contrast to the problems he associates with these approaches, Skinner identifies his own methodology.

*Textualist* approaches, Skinner claims, argue that understanding of a work can be obtained by reading the text ‘over and over again’.<sup>11</sup> Textualists, Skinner asserts, believe that the works of the political theory ‘canon’ are addressing ‘universal questions’ to which ‘timeless answers’ are possible and that these ‘great texts’ seek to lay down essential propositions about political reality: admitting the role of context in setting texts’ problems is an anathema. However, as Skinner asserts, “the classic texts cannot be concerned with our questions and answers, but only with their own” (quoted in Tarcov, 1988, p.194). Textualism rests on assumptions about the stability of linguistic concepts but while it is a ‘necessary truth’ that most concepts and linguistic rules are likely stable over some time, it is a ‘fatal mistake’ to assume this is so with the terms one is interested in. This takes a too rigid view of language, which does have rules but changes over time. For example, the meaning of ‘the State’ to Machiavelli and Weber is not the same, although there is clear linguistic similarity. Thus, what might appear to be two answers to the same ‘timeless question’ might be addressing very different concerns, within different contexts. For example, “contemporary usage [of ‘luxury’] in the rhetoric of advertising is far removed from the opprobrium to which it was subject by Cato the Elder” (Berry, 1994, p.45).

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<sup>11</sup> Minogue questions whether this position is held by anyone, ‘even’ Plamenatz, “into whose protesting hands a banner marked ‘the textualist approach to intellectual history’ is regularly thrust, prior to condign punishment being meted out” (1988, p.181).

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Such a mistaken view of language leads textualists to affirm ‘false mythologies’: the ‘mythology of parochialism’ or misreading texts by translating terms into modern equivalents with different sense and reference; the ‘mythology of doctrines’ where all theorists are assumed to have something to say on all aspects of the discipline, which can be ‘looked for’ even if views on a particular subject could not in principle be held by that author. The latter implies that political ideas are historically imminent and leads to, for example, the perception of ‘anticipations’ of future theories: these may be interesting but cannot have been ‘intended’ and do not constitute part of the *historical* meaning of the text. This also leads to a ‘naive diffusionism’, where ideas are assumed to become accepted in themselves, independent of the practical political context, and so “the fact that ideas presuppose agents is very readily discounted as the ideas get up and do battle on their own” (Skinner, 1988a, p.35). Textualism further commits, Skinner asserts, the false ‘mythology of coherence’ where consistency throughout the canon of a theorist’s work is assumed and the historian seeks to uncover coherence, ignoring the possibility of inconsistency or changes of opinion.<sup>12</sup> The real concern of the intellectual historian, Skinner asserts, should be to explain, not explain away, such contradictions. Lastly, textualists are guilty of the ‘mythology of prolepsis’, being more concerned with the retrospective significance of a text than its historical importance.<sup>13</sup> Skinner argues that intentions should not be ascribed which the author himself would not be able to accept.<sup>14</sup> The lesson drawn is that “the recovery of the historical meaning of any given text is a necessary condition of

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<sup>12</sup> One example of such ‘inconsistency’ is the perceived difference between the ‘republican’ Machiavelli of the *Discourses*, and the more familiar popular conception of Machiavelli from *The Prince*. See Crick’s introduction to Machiavelli, 1974; Skinner, 1981; 2000; Viroli, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> One example of such ‘prolepsis’ is the claim that Plato was a ‘totalitarian’.

<sup>14</sup> This does not mean that a more convincing account could not be authored or intention could not be translated into modern terms, although this must be done carefully.

understanding it, and that this process can never be achieved simply by studying the text itself” (Skinner, 1988d, p.104). Thus, attention should be focused on texts within their historical context, and the intention of the author as an agent within that context.

The alternative *contextualist* approach regards works as representative of the discourse of which they form a part. This is inappropriate for intellectual history, Skinner claims, as it ‘dissolves’ text into context, undervaluing the importance of agency, and questions the idea of intellectual history as a discipline. The subject of the discipline becomes one of sociological ‘language games’. Rather, the context should be seen as the site of action by the author, and the context should be used to understand the ‘meaning’ of that action embodied within the text. The focus, Skinner asserts, should not be on language but what can be done with it. Dissolving the text into context leads to a causal history where ideas develop because of antecedent conditions and ignores agency in favour of structure. Rather, agency should be prioritised as:

“[t]he pen is a mighty sword. We are of course embedded in practices and constrained by them. But these practices owe their dominance to the power of our normative language to hold them in place, and it is always open to us to employ the resources of our language to undermine as well as to underpin these practices. We may be freer than we sometimes suppose” (Skinner, 2002a, p.7).

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Knowing the cause of an action is not the same as understanding its 'meaning', historical or otherwise. This requires knowing its 'point', the intention of the agent carrying out the activity, which is more complex than is often assumed:

"It is a striking fact about current discussions of the claim that actions are caused that they tend to be mounted in terms of such excessively simple and routine examples - always things like putting on one's coat, never things like writing the Iliad - that the question of the *point* of the action is very easily made to seem wholly transparent, or quite unimportant" (Skinner, 1988a, p.59).

Works should be read as conscious political interventions within an ideological/discursive context; text and context should be seen as interdependent. Thus, the work, conceived as a political act by an engaged agent, and the context within which it is situated, are the necessary subjects of the intellectual historian. In adapting this methodology, the individual texts of the Scottish debate are examined as active and meaningful contributions to their historical context. As Paterson notes, with regard to his documentary selection from the debate, none of the texts selected are wholly independent of the others, even across partisan divisions (1998a, p.x).

An implication of this methodological position is a close linkage of intellectual and political history and the importance of ideas in accounting for political developments. As Skinner notes:

“The adoption of this approach might also help to illuminate some of the connections between political theory and practice. It is often observed that political historians tend to assign a somewhat marginal role to political ideas and principles in seeking to explain political behaviour. And it is evident that, as long as historians of political theories continue to think of their main task as that of interpreting a canon of classical texts, it will remain difficult to establish any closer links between political theories and political life. But if they were instead to think of themselves as students of ideologies, it might become possible to illustrate one crucial way in which the explanation of political behaviour depends upon the study of political ideas and principles and cannot meaningfully be conducted without reference to them” (1978a, p.xii).

This thesis is just such a history of ideology, or more specifically ideological change, as that recommended by Skinner, in line with his wish to develop “a history of political thought with a genuinely historical character” (quoted in Tarcov, 1988, p.195).

### **§3.2. Quentin Skinner: A ‘Genuinely Historical’ Methodology.**

The idea that works of political philosophy are political acts within a practical and ideological context is derived from the later Wittgenstein and JL Austin. Wittgenstein argues that language and action are inextricably inter-related. As Ball et al articulate, “the limits of one’s language mark the limits of one’s world. Our moral language maps political possibilities and impossibilities; it enables us to do certain things, even as it discourages or

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disables us from doing others” (1989, p.2). Even a simple act can be described in different ways, affecting our perception of the social situation thus constituted, although the act also limits the descriptions.<sup>15</sup> Language embodies how we understand the world: “our concepts are not forced upon us by the world but represent what we bring to the world in order to understand it” (Skinner, 2003a, p.46).

To be understandable as acts, texts must be related to a linguistic structure within which those acts make sense. However, according to Wittgenstein, as well as being inter-related with action, language is inter-subjective, giving it the ability to both liberate and constrain. It provides both a degree of linguistic stability and resources for criticism or development. Language may encourage and praise or discourage and condemn actions. It therefore provides the ‘moral map’ of our world but by implication the contours of this map are neither stable nor reliable. Words are not unchanging terms that relate to ‘things in the world’ but inter-subjectively agreed terms, which can be ‘renegotiated’, not unilaterally but by linguistic agreement. Wittgenstein is thus able to assert, as Skinner is fond of quoting, that “words are also deeds” (Skinner, 1988f, p.260), in that they have an effect on the linguistic structure either reinforcing or ‘making a bid’, successfully or unsuccessfully, to change it. As action and language are inter-related and alterable, utterances must be understood within their linguistic and practical context: utterances and performed actions must be understood as acting on language and on the world. As Ball et al note, “[s]peaking

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<sup>15</sup> Ayer, for example, identifies fifteen possible descriptions of the activity of ‘drinking a glass of wine’ including self-indulgence, an expression of politeness or proof of alcoholism (Skinner, 1998c, pp.88-9). However, drinking wine could not constitute ‘firing a missile’, at least without some other explanatory context.

a language involves taking on a world, and altering the concepts constitutive of that language involves nothing less than remaking the world” (1989, p.ix). Thus, the intellectual historian must investigate texts in their ideological/linguistic context and take individual contributions seriously as linguistic acts.

From Austin, Skinner takes the idea that words are particular kinds of deeds: speech-acts. In his ‘speech act theory’, Austin (1962) identifies three different meanings that words carry: ‘locutionary’ or literal meaning; ‘perlocutionary’ meaning, or the resulting state of affairs intended to be brought about; but most importantly, every utterance carries a performative or ‘illocutionary’ meaning. This is what is being done by words in being spoken, which is the point of the utterance or the intention of the speaker in speaking those words.<sup>16</sup> Every utterance, according to this theory, is the performance of a speech act: “anyone who issues a serious utterance will always be doing something as well as saying something, and doing it in virtue of saying what is said” (Skinner, 1988f, p.262).

The most common ‘speech act’ is to ‘communicate’, or ‘convey information’, but words can do many things depending on their linguistic/social context. For example, the expression ‘I do’ said by a bride to a groom in a church in front of a minister in the context of a marriage ceremony carries a number of acts performed in saying those words in that context: as well as ‘communicating with the groom and audience’, the bride is ‘conveying an affirmative to a proposition’, ‘expressing love’ and ‘sealing the marriage’. However, the

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<sup>16</sup> Speech act theory has been developed by later linguists: see JR Searle (1969), *Speech Acts*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; JR Searle (1979), *Expression and Meaning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. For a fuller outline of speech act theory see Austin, 1962; Schiffrin, 1994.



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words 'I do' do not carry these illocutionary meanings all the time. One's social context, and the linguistic conventions that it evokes and is partially determined by, determines the 'speech act potential' of the words used. Understanding this potential is something listeners do instinctively, shown by their 'gaining uptake', in Austinian terminology, of the illocutionary meaning of the utterance. Thus, for the parents of the bride to cry at this moment demonstrates 'uptake' (or expresses disappointment at their daughter's choice of husband); for a guest to burst out laughing at the utterance shows lack of 'uptake' (or that the guest is aware of some hidden irony).

Skinner gives an illustrative example of the usefulness of distinguishing locutionary and illocutionary meaning: a policeman saying 'the ice over there is very thin' to a skater (Skinner, 1988c, p.83). The locutionary meaning is the information proffered about the ice; the illocutionary meaning of the words however, the point of the utterance, is likely to be to 'warn' the skater lest she fall through the ice; the perlocutionary result is that the skater is warned (whether or not she acts on the warning: illocutionary acts can 'misfire' or fail to achieve the desired perlocutionary result). Skinner believes that it is the distinction between the locutionary and illocutionary meaning of texts, which is often missed and, if taken into account, provides a valuable way to understand the meaning of texts. Thus, the question 'why did the policeman say what he said?' could be answered with 'to warn the skater'. This re-description of the policeman's words as an illocutionary act - its point or the intended meaning of the agent performing the act - is sufficient to answer the question. Important here is identifying the text (the policeman's utterance) as an intentional act with

meaning reliant on the agent's intention within the context, and as meant to be understood.

Skinner argues political texts should be seen, in the same way, as illocutionary acts.

Intention is often ignored, either because it is said to lie inside the text itself or is irrecoverably outside the text. Thus, some theorists claim the essential aspect of understanding is the reader's response to texts and authors' intentions are unrecoverable. Skinner admits Ricoeur's claim, for example, that texts have 'surplus meaning' over and above authorial intention due to the connotations of language use (1988f, p.272). However, this is, by definition, not the historical meaning of the texts. There are many ways to use texts that move beyond texts as historical documents, but these are not histories. Skinner is also rather dismissive of Derrida, who he characterises as arguing that seeking historical meaning stops the "joyous affirmation of the free-play of the world" (Skinner, 1988f, p.272). Skinner refutes such claims as "straightforwardly false" (1988b, p.73). He admits that:

"[i]t may indeed be impossible to recover more than a small fraction of the things that Plato, say, was doing in the Republic. My point is only that the extent to which we can hope to understand the Republic depends in part on the extent to which we can recover them" (1988f, p.263).

The way to recover the intentional meaning of a text is to uncover its speech act potential and determine which speech act(s) were being performed. Thus, "to know a language is to know what things may be done with it, so that to study a thinker is to see what he

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attempted to do with it” (Pocock, 1984, p.28). It is within this context that sense can be made of the utterance as an intentional act. However, this is not easy. For example, it is possible the policeman in the ice-skater example really intended to answer the skater’s question about the state of the ice; start up a conversation as he is attracted to the skater; change the topic of conversation; start a conversation with the skater in order to avoid making eye contact with his creditor whom he has spotted strolling along the edge of the lake. If any of these other intentions is the ‘point’ of the utterance, then the explanation that he was attempting to ‘warn’ does not explain the utterance. Of course the skater might unintentionally *be* warned, but this would still not be the ‘point’. How to decide which is the relevant description that makes sense of the act in intentional terms is something that can be identified by the relationship of the act to the relevant context. Without knowing anything but the initial description of the situation, the illocutionary meaning of ‘warning’ is the one that makes most sense given the linguistic and non-linguistic context (the social role of policemen; the relevance of the proffered information to the skater). If we knew other things about the context (the skater having asked a question; the policeman showing signs of being attracted to the skater; the utterance being part of an ongoing conversation but unrelated to the previous topic; the policeman’s creditor being present), the illocutionary explanation is more likely to be the relevant one to those circumstances. Therefore, both the text as an intentional act and the context as the relevant situation that makes the illocutionary act meaningful need to be understood.

The problem is how to identify the relevant context that allows an insight into the illocutionary meaning of the text and the author's intention. Skinner suggests that the relevant context can be identified by an examination of similar documents, and an identification of the relevant ideological and linguistic conventions present in them. Of course the context may vary with the text: for example Machiavelli saw himself contributing to a philosophical tradition, and so this philosophical tradition is part of the context (or rather the plural contexts) of his work (Skinner, 1981; 2000 Viroli, 1998). As Pocock articulates, "the language [an author] uses is not of his own making; it has been made by others" (1984, p.30). As this language constitutes the concepts and conventions within which we necessarily operate, they are the "sedimentation and institutionalisation of the utterances performed by others whose identities and intentions may no longer be known" (Pocock, 1984, p.31). In this sense, "the author inhabits an historically given world that is apprehensible only in ways rendered available by...the modes of speech available to him [which] give him the intentions he can have, by giving him the means he can have to perform them" (Pocock, 1985, p.5) or, as Berry notes:

"it is inherent in the very use of language that it is fluid; the expression 'play on words' is very apt. Nevertheless...much of such 'playfulness' relies on existing received meanings; it is the meanings that are being inventively exploited through irony, pun, hyperbole, litotes and so on" (1994, p.4).

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Thus, “given the premises of inter-subjectivity, it is important to realise that there can be no such thing as a purely self-defining speech-act” (Pocock, 1984, p.39). Conventions determine the speech act potential of words in use. Uncovering the context of the text is the process of identifying these conventions, against which the illocutionary meaning of texts can be assessed. An illustrative example is Machiavelli’s advice in *The Prince*: “Princes must learn when not to be virtuous” (Tully, 1988, p.9). Clarification of the locutionary meaning is important, and certainly ‘virtuous’ requires definition, particularly given the difference between the conventional meaning and that of Machiavelli’s ‘virtu’. However, this does not tell us why this piece of advice is given. This information is obtained by placing *The Prince* in the ideological context of similar contemporary texts, the ‘mirror of princes’ literature of the Quattrocento. As within this ideological context it is conventional to advise princes to virtue, Machiavelli’s point is to challenge or reject this convention. This does not fully explain the illocutionary meaning of the text. However, the injunction to understand texts in their context does not merely refer to textual contexts. Other texts are useful for uncovering common conventions, but the practical context is also relevant. The examination of any text, according to the Cambridge School, requires an understanding of this discursive context and the object of study becomes the impact of the text on the context as a linguistic (and political) act. As Skinner notes, “political life itself sets the main problems for the political theorist, causing a certain range of issues to appear problematic, and a corresponding range of questions to become the leading subjects of debate” (quoted in Tully, 1988, pp.10-11). Thus, in terms of the reasons for his advice, Machiavelli is conventional: the aim of the Prince should be for his security and the security and expansion of his realm. The advice, then, must be that to provide for these

(conventional) ends, unconventional means should be adopted. The reasons for this are determined by the practical context. Machiavelli's 'problem' is set by the fall of the Florentine Republic to the Medici and the disunity of, and foreign influence within, Italy. Machiavelli argues, therefore, that to overcome these problems requires a strong Prince willing to do what is necessary to achieve the traditional ends of state maintenance, even by unconventional means.<sup>17</sup>

While Skinner believes that authorial intentions and the historical meaning of documents can be recovered, proclaiming the doctrine of 'the death of the author' to be exaggerated, nevertheless he recognises that his methodology "leaves the traditional figure of the author in rather poor health", in that he becomes an actor within an ideological context (Skinner, 2002a, pp.117-118). The object of study is moved from texts towards the effect of texts on the ideological context in which they operate. Thus, the subject matter of the history of ideas becomes what Skinner calls 'ideologies', ideology formation and change. Given the claims made for the importance of ideas and agents to historical explanations of political change, this also provides a way to recover in a historically sensitive way the ideological developments that attend periods of political change such as the Scottish constitutional debate, recovering the conventions of the debate and studying their development through the documentary evidence.

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<sup>17</sup> For more on Machiavelli, see Skinner, 1978a; 1981; 2000; 2002b; Tarcov, 1988; Viroli, 1995; 1998.

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Thus, as well as allowing a fuller understanding of the work of thinkers conventionally seen as canonical in the 'history of political thought', reinstating them as political actors within their contemporary context; or revealing the historicity of concepts and events, an ideological history can be constructed from published texts to elucidate contemporary periods of politics and political change assumed to be understood but which can be just as 'alien'. The context of the Scottish constitutional debate in the 1967-1979 period, for example, was different from today. This is illustrated by the claim that in 1969, "[i]n the House of Commons...there is a tendency to blame the Scottish members for forcing unpalatable measure on England when they constitute a large part of the Labour majority" (Hanham, 1969, p28). This would sound anachronistic in the 1980s and 1990s, when the frequent complaint was that Conservatives governed Scotland due to an English Conservative majority, despite Labour dominance of Scottish Parliamentary representation. However, it does not sound anachronistic today, post-devolution, when a number of recent government policies in England and Wales, such as foundation hospitals, only achieved a majority in the House of Commons due to the presence of Scottish MPs. Thus, continuity of context must not be assumed.

### **§3.3. Linguistic Change and Discourse Development.**

Texts, therefore, are acts within linguistic and historical, or ideological, contexts and through texts the conventions of these ideological contexts, within which these texts operate and make sense, can be recovered. As linguistic structures are inter-subjective, such ideological processes are developmental. The concept of 'discourse' emphasises these

aspects. Discourses consist of such things as “idioms, rhetorics, specialised vocabularies and grammars...ways of talking about politics which have been created and diffused” (Pocock, 1987, p.21). They have a shared vocabulary; a common set of (positive and negative) appraisive terms and shared criteria for their meaning, sense and reference; shared assumptions, distinctions and understandings. Importantly, this linguistic structure is complicit with the social world, in the sense that it legitimises enables, or condemns and makes impossible actions. As political action is enabled by one’s discourse, in the sense that what is perceived as possible/legitimate is exemplified in language, to change one’s language successfully is to have an impact on the actions available to agents and the discursive context. In the study of discursive change, therefore, this process is key and both context and agency are seen as interrelated. As Pocock notes, although the author is located within historically constituted contexts, “an author is himself both the expropriator, taking language from others and using it to his purposes, and the innovator acting upon language, so as to induce...change” (Pocock, 1985, p.6).

Skinner links political action and discourse through the use of appraisive terms. Manipulation of the appraisive terms of a discourse to re-describe an action either in neutral terms or reversing the conventional appraisive sense of words, is how ideological change occurs: “it is essentially by manipulating this set of terms that any society succeeds in establishing and altering its moral identity” (Tully, 1988, p.13). Skinner suggests that there are a number of ways of manipulating such terms: “to apply any word to the world we need to have a clear grasp of both its sense and its reference. But in the case of appraisive terms, a further element is also required. We need in addition to know what



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exact range of attitudes the term can standardly be used to express” (1988e, p.122). Importantly, one must know the standard speech act potential of the word, typically whether it carries positive, negative or neutral connotations. By manipulating the sense and reference of appraisive terms one can then alter the word’s speech act potential: the range of actions, which can be performed with that word. The example of the ‘courageous minister’ will illustrate.

### **Yes, Minister.**

In the 1980s British television comedy *Yes, Minister*, Sir Humphrey Appleby, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Administrative Affairs, often seeks to prejudice his Minister against particular projects by describing them as ‘courageous’. Although the traditional appraisive connotations of the term are positive and commendatory, the context of use manipulates the term in order to give it the same sense as ‘foolhardy’, altering its evaluative sense. Sir Humphrey uses the word in relation to policies his minister would expect him to oppose: thus in the same way that irony works because the words spoken are known/suspected to be at odds with the beliefs of the speaker, the evaluative meaning of courageous is reversed by the context of its use. The meaning of ‘courageous’ is traditionally to positively evaluate acts that demonstrate bravery. The ‘sense’ or meaning of a term is to refer to actions which occur under certain circumstances, such that it is a truism to say ‘courage’ is to perform acts under circumstances x, y or z. The ‘reference’ of the term is those circumstances, the range or criteria of application of the term. ‘Courage’ refers to acts that occur under such circumstances as overwhelming opposition, almost certain defeat, personal sacrifice and lack of regard for personal safety.

In Sir Humphrey's usage, the reference is unchanged. In fact the reversal of the evaluative sense of the word is effected by *emphasising* this reference, so that the description of a policy as courageous is in effect to say that the policy will be overwhelmingly opposed, be likely to fail and cost much personal political capital. The appraisive connotations are reversed precisely because of an agreed, reinforced reference. Similarly, the reference of the term can be altered. However, this also demonstrates limits to such manipulation, and reinforces Skinner's focus on studying texts within their context. As language is intersubjective, meaning, sense and reference of terms cannot be altered wholesale. As Skinner notes:

“[t]he problem facing an agent who wants to legitimate what he is doing at the same time as getting what he wants cannot simply be the instrumental problem of tailoring his normative language in order to fit his projects; it must in part be the problem of tailoring his projects in order to fit his normative language” (quoted in Tully, 1988, p.14).

Thus, to change the meaning of 'courageous', Sir Humphrey could not completely alter the meaning of the word but had to emphasise the negative aspects of its reference. Linguistic (and therefore also political) change is necessarily evolutionary:

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“Every revolutionary is to this extent obliged to march backwards into battle. To legitimate his behaviour he is committed to showing that it can be described in such a way that those who currently disapprove of it can somehow be brought to see that they ought to withhold their disapproval after all” (Skinner, 1988d, p.112).

Nevertheless, Skinner reminds us of the radical nature of such conflicts and challenges to conventional understandings. It is through the existence of conventions that stable social orders are observable. As Berry recognises, “[c]onventions establish the predictability and constancy without which social intercourse would be impossible. Part of what it means to be a stranger is an inability (remediable) to follow what is ‘going on’” (1994, p.236). As this is the case, “[c]onventions bind; they have to” (Berry, 1994, p.235). Thus, changes of category “mark social change, but it is the placement of them into stable categories that enables society to keep their grammar, and with it their identity, while their vocabulary changes” (Berry, 1994, p.239). Conflicts about conventions in and through language have social implications: “[c]onceptual-cum political change is at once critical, creative and conservative” (Ball et al, 1989, p.3).

Skinner suggests a useful set of methodological postulates for examining discourses, understanding and utilising texts as interventions within linguistic/historical discursive contexts in order to understand those discourses. Through examination of a range of documents, the discursive context can be reconstructed, the point of texts understood in relation to conventions, and the effects of these texts on those conventions traced. Berry conceptualises this process as one of the acquisition of a shared ‘social grammar’:

“as ignorance of a language’s grammar makes confident and accurate communication in that tongue extremely difficult and haphazard, so ignorance of social grammar makes comprehension of that society problematic...members of a society, by virtue of their mastery of its grammar (their subscription to its rules, conventions or norms) give to their conduct not only a predictability but also...the coherence that constitutes a vital ingredient in their own identity. Of course ‘predictability’ should not be confused with immutability – identity undergoes changes and faces challenges” (1994, p.236).

Ideological change can be understood in relation to these processes. Social grammar can be learned, changes studied. However, such research must be conducted carefully. As Berry notes, “changes in evaluations or normative discourse are to be plotted with care” as “[c]onceptual shifts usually take the form of exploiting existing ‘meanings’, in particular exploiting ambiguities. This exercise, again usually, is undertaken for limited and specific, perhaps even argumentatively tactical purposes” (1994, p.102). To Pocock, the manner in which this is done constitutes the role of the historian, who must:

“read and recognise the diverse idioms of political discourse as they were available in the culture and at the time he is studying...identify them as they appear in the linguistic texture of any one text...know what they would ordinarily have enabled that text’s author to...‘say’. The extent to which the author’s employment of them was out of the ordinary comes later” (1985, p.9).

**§5. Conclusion.**

Pocock asserts that Skinner's methodology logically leads towards not just recovering authorial intention but the languages that give meaning to intentions: discourse. The discourse reconstructed in this thesis is the Scottish constitutional debate within which an identifiable discourse community formed. This is the process through which the intellectual foundations of modern Scotland's politics were developed. Skinnerian methodology allows an understanding of the process through which the discourse community developed, and the ideological basis of Scottish politics was changed.

**The Scottish Discourse Community in Context.**

**§1. Introduction.**

Chapter One provided a brief ontological outline of the discourse community as an informal discursive institution within which ideological commitments are developed in an ongoing process between mutually recognising interlocutors, potentially creating a shared identity. It is a *community* in that it locates ideological discourse amongst a set of particular discussants, with parameters defined according to the inter-subjective conventions developed through their interaction. The process through which conventions are constructed, legitimised and maintained is ongoing deliberation, forming a community of identification amongst participants through *discourse*. That it is a community of discourse emphasises its developmental nature, historicity and specificity as an inter-subjective community. This chapter will expand on this concept in relation to the specific discourse community created within the Scottish constitutional debate.

Chapter One argued that the world is partly conceptually constructed, is changeable through discourse, and through examining texts we can reconstruct the conventions of past ideological contexts. Through discourse, individuals order social relations and legitimate institutions. However, it should be emphasised that the world is not *wholly* linguistically constructed, nor is a post-structuralist view of the world as constituted by competing ideological perceptions implied; rather discourse operates within and in relation to concrete

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events and agents, such that change is necessarily evolutionary and complex. Thus, while agents find themselves within discourses and inherited ideological contexts, this does not reduce them to ‘mouthpieces’ for discourses:

“the more complex...the linguistic context...the richer and more ambivalent become the [possible] speech-acts...and the greater becomes the likelihood that these acts will perform upon the context itself and induce modification and change” (Pocock, 1985, p.5).

Chapter One outlined a conception of ideological and discursive change as both contextual and evolutionary. In identifying the Scottish discourse community both should be borne in mind. The development of a discourse community occurs within and through the constitutional debate and it is through the reconstruction of this context that the discourse community is identified. Therefore, an outline of the main events and developments of the period will help locate and contextualise the discourse community, identifying key figures and documents and outlining how these are related in the development of a definable discourse community. However, the constitutional debate and the discourse community developed within that debate emerges from an already extant ideological context. This provides the discursive space and ideological resources available for the development of a discourse community, structuring the possibilities for its development.

## **§2. The Ideological Inheritance.**

The inherited ideological context can be located through examining the location of Scottishness. Whilst not arguing that civil society is coterminous with the discourse community, the traditional location of 'Scottishness' in civil society illustrates the conceptual space within which the discourse community develops. The relationship between ideology and identity posited by Armitage is useful here. To him the concept of 'the British Empire' was "originally an ideology, not an identity" in that it signalled an area of contestation rather than "a normative self-conception" (2000, p.172). Given that identity is a fluid rather than fixed concept, this distinction can be over-emphasised. Nevertheless, it suggests that, in Armitage's terms, the difference between ideology and identity is the degree of ideological consensus and that an ideology may become an identity once its values achieve pre-eminence through contestation. There was already a shared identity in Scotland in 1967, otherwise to talk of 'Scottish history' is to discuss the history of a mere geographical expression. This identity is internally and externally identifiable and constitutes an important ideological reserve for the development of the discourse community.

'Scottishness' is often located in the separate Scottish civil institutions retained after the 1707 Treaty of Union that incorporated Scotland and England into the United Kingdom. Most famously these include the 'holy trinity' of the Church of Scotland, the legal system and educational system. As Morton notes, "Scottish national identity has - from the eighteenth century most clearly - been located in its civil society" (2001, p.3). Civil society



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has “had several meanings throughout history” (Faulks, 1999, p.30), and “the definition of the concept has changed over time and still today can mean different things to different people” (Morton, 2001, p.3). Modern theorists “draw a clear distinction between society and the state...civil society takes place outside the state and refers to a realm of autonomous associations and groups, formed by individuals in their capacity as private citizens” (Heywood, 2004, p.41). It is “those groups which are ‘above’ the personal realm...but ‘beneath’ the state” (Hague & Harrop, 2004, p.127). Faulks argues that, as opposed to ‘society’, in civil society “[t]he institutions...all have a political aspect to them...[and] enjoy various degrees of autonomy from the state. Importantly, the institutions of civil society can act as counterpoints to the power of the state” (1999, p.2). Gellner also emphasises civil society as counterbalance to state power. Importantly, these institutions are voluntary but the institutional links are “effective even though they are flexible, specific, instrumental” (Gellner, 1994, p.42). With characteristic humour, Gellner defines civil society as a “cluster of institutions and associations strong enough to prevent tyranny, but...entered and left freely, rather than imposed by birth or...awesome ritual. You can join (say) the Labour party without slaughtering a sheep” (1994, p.42). Civil society is, therefore, an institutional framework of voluntary associations that maintain autonomous civil life, in the sense of organised, lawful interaction outside of the direct control of the state. That Scotland retains a distinct civil society is clearly an important, widely recognised factor in maintaining her nationhood. However, civil society is not merely an institutional framework but must be underpinned by a supportive ideological framework. To Gellner, what underlies civil society is nationalism, transmitted through mass education. He defines nationalism as a political principle aiming at the ‘nation-state’

where “the political and national unit should be congruent...Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by a violation of this principle, or a feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment” (1983, p.1). The reference to the importance of education points to the cultural identification of, and with, the nation created by *nationalism*. The key issue is how this ideological glue binding civil society together is formed, or how, in Gellner’s phrase, nationalism invents nations.

Whether it is true that “[n]ationalism...invents nations where they do not exist” as a by-product of industrialisation (Gellner, 1964, p.168) or whether, as AD Smith argues, Gellner exaggerates the ‘creationist’ element and nations *are* modern *but* use raw materials from the past (1996), is a seminal debate within nationalist literature, although the contrast is less extreme than often supposed.<sup>18</sup> Whether the national past is created or used is less significant than understanding the process through which that past is constructed/transformed: as McCrone notes, “all traditions are ‘invented’ insofar as they are constructed and mobilised for current political ends in some way or another. In this respect, there are no ‘real’ (as opposed to ‘invented’) traditions” (1998, p.44). What is important is the process of invention.

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<sup>18</sup> Smith insists that the nation must use elements of the past, however much these are distorted and manipulated, emphasising the nation’s cultural genealogy; Gellner admits pre-existing cultures are used, but argues this is not always the case, emphasising the process which leads to the necessity of nations and the contingency of which ‘nation’ emerges: that nationalism occurs is predictable, but not which groups will be successfully nationalist, or what resources will be used (1983, p.47).

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Baycroft notes that despite internal differences, “[t]he mutual awareness and affirmation of...ties, and identification with other members” (1998, p.4) is the key aspect of the nation such that, as Canovan outlines:

“a nation is a polity that feels like a community...it cannot exist without subjective identification, and itself is, to some extent dependent on free individual choice, but that choice is nonetheless experienced as a destiny transcending individuality” (1996, p.69).

Anderson argues that this national identification is created through a process of collectively ‘imagining the nation’. The nation is imagined “because even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members...yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (1991, p.6). He contrasts this with Gellner, who often:

“assimilates ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity’, rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’. In this way he implies that ‘true’ communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (1991, p.6).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This is not good enough for Pittock, who argues that imagining “lies dangerously close to the debunking potential of ‘inventing’...with its concomitant idea that a mass of people can accept a fraud perpetrated by a publicist or creative artist as part of their own identity” (2001, p.3).

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The content of the nation imagined is individual to each national community and is essential to understanding any particular nation: how the past, symbols and myths are implicated in particular national identities. The *process* of identity construction is one of discourse: “[i]dentities are constructed within discourses or cultural representations which lay down how we define ourselves” (McCrone, 1998, p.43). Thus, there is no particular reason why the Scottish ‘holy trinity’ should be seen as the central elements of a distinctive Scottish civil society, other than that there is a historical shared understanding to see them as central. Few historians demur from the recognition of the role and importance of these institutions, such that Miller notes that “1707 appears...at the start of every description of Scottish government and every debate about it” (1981, p.1). There is a standard account and broad recognition that Scotland is “an historic nation with distinct institutions and a sense of itself” (Bennie et al, 1994, p.3). The common recognition of these institutions, and their possession of Scottish identity, indicates:

“[t]he significance of the 1707 myth...that in recent times there has been widespread acceptance, both in London and Scotland, that Scotland exists as a nation in more or less voluntary Union with England. The perpetual Treaty of Union, despite all its references to provisions ‘remaining in all time coming’, is thus almost as renegotiable as the perpetual Treaty of Rome...both ultimately depend upon each succeeding generation making the calculation that the treaty secures their interest sufficiently well for it not to be worth the trouble of renegotiation” (Miller, 1981, p.1).

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Such conventional understandings affect, and are affected by, interaction. Understanding this process as one of ‘discourse’ emphasises both the inter-subjectivity and ongoing nature of the process of identity construction. These aspects must be borne in mind in the reconstruction of the debate and are inherent aspects of the discourse community as a discursive institution. This also confirms that the distinction between identity and ideology is, as suggested above, a difference of the degree of ideological consensus. As Stuart Hall notes:

“Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, with the new cultural practices they represent, we should think of identity as ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (quoted in McCrone, 1998, p.29).

Discourse may ‘lay down how we define ourselves’ but not unalterably. Identity, constructed and reaffirmed through ongoing interaction, is also subject to change and thus discourse “not only reconfigures and re-enacts social relationships and patterns of behaviour, it also re-negotiates social relationships and introduces new meanings and new behaviours” (Stiller, 1998, p.5). As we will see, discursive identity is changeable, including its external boundaries and internal divisions. Discourses, including the discourse community, are in principle relatively open to change.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, “it will not be necessary

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<sup>20</sup> This, of course, depends on the discourse’s *content* and development. This also accounts for the distinctiveness of different civil societies (conceived as discursive institutions). Some civil society ideologies

for the cultural content of two adjacent groups to alter significantly - indeed they may grow similar. What matters is the interaction across a meaningful boundary (not only geographical, but also social and cultural) which may weaken or strengthen” (McCrone, 1998, p.28).<sup>21</sup> How these boundaries are drawn affects, and is affected by, interaction. As Gee explains, “[d]iscourses have no discrete boundaries because people are always in history, creating new discourses, changing old ones and contesting and pushing the boundaries” (1999, p.21). This is the process through which the discourse community is established within the constitutional debate. In this sense the concept of ‘discourse community’ emphasises the effects of discourse in developing a specific community, constituted by conventions and developed through discourse.

In contrast to Anderson’s imagined community, the discourse community is conceptualised as a concretely located discourse amongst definite interlocutors amongst whom conventions are established and recognised, and ideological contestation occurs. It is not ‘the imagined nation’ discursively defined. While the concept of the discourse community may be usable in a variety of contexts, it must be deployed *within* a concrete context to be analytically useful. While Finlay notes that “[i]t is too easy to look at the ideas of the elite and pass them off as those of the people” (1997, p.6), here the distinction between elite and mass is crucial in delineating the discourse community and determining its usefulness. The distinction relies on the notion that the ‘elite’, conceptualised loosely as opinion formers

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affirm a cohesive set of shared understandings; others are looser. Therefore, while the concept of civil society emphasises its voluntary nature, this may not always be reflected substantively.

<sup>21</sup> McCrone here refers specifically to Scotland and England, which have become increasingly similar in socio-economic terms but more distinct politically and, McCrone would argue, in national identity terms.

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and public figures, have influence in determining the societal ideology of collectivities such as nations. As Hague and Harrop note “[e]ven where mass attitudes to politics are well developed...it is still the views of the elite which exert the most direct effect on political decisions” (2004, p.98). Thus, elite ideology “is far more than a representative fragment of the values of the wider society” (Hague & Harrop, 2004, p.98), although these clearly overlap and interact. The discourse community is an elite community, and as Bennie et al note, the development of Scottish support for ‘home rule’ was “elite led” (1997, p.153); this thesis focuses on the predominantly elite ideological discourse of the Scottish constitutional debate between 1967-1979 and identifies the discourse community which developed within the parameters of the elite contributors to the debate and the events of the period.

### **§3. Scottish Politics 1967-1979.**

The period between the SNP’s 1967 Hamilton Parliamentary by-election victory and the 1979 devolution referendum is the focus as these events are seen, at the time and in retrospect, as crucial turning points, bookending a period where constitutional change was at or near the top of Scotland’s political agenda. Although constitutional change had been an issue before this period, it did not dominate the political agenda as it would from 1967-1979 and would not do again until the late 1980s.<sup>22</sup> The 1979 devolution referendum is a

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<sup>22</sup> While elements of continuity are evident with earlier movements for some form of devolution - for example the ‘West Lothian Question’ (see Chapter Four, p.181, Fn.91) was first raised in the 1880s rather than the 1970s when it became famous under that name (Finlay, 1997, p.4) - it would be a historical fallacy

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convenient cut-off point, as Miller notes, justifying adoption of the same end point: it provides “a natural break in the progress of Scottish politics: a time to review the hectic decade of the '70s” (1981, p.5).

Butler and Stokes' *Political Change in Britain* (1969) only includes one reference to Scottish nationalism, as an example of weakening class alignment, and none to devolution or related concepts. This is understandable as Butler and Stokes drew on 1963/4 survey material and the SNP won only 5%, and no seats, as late as the 1966 General Election. A few years later more comment would be necessary as, although Mitchell is doubtless correct that “[t]here are few occasions when one issue alone dominated the political scene” (1996a, p.5), between 1967 and 1979 Scotland's constitutional status did dominate Scottish politics. Intermittent SNP electoral success after 1967, never before a significant factor, propelled this debate to the top of the political agenda.

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to equate all movements 1880-1979 as having the same aim. Significant differences in objective and motivation are evident: see Mitchell (1996a); Finlay (1997).



### §3.1. The Immediate Context: Hamilton and Scottish Politics.

There is notable consensus that the modern Scottish constitutional debate began with the victory of the SNP's Winifred Ewing in the Hamilton by election of November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1967.<sup>23</sup> Devine begins his chapter on 'The Scottish Question' with a discussion of Hamilton, "[t]he most sensational by-election result in Scotland since 1945" (1999, p.574), claiming that "[a]fter 1967 and 1968 Scottish politics would never be the same again" (1999, p.575). To Hassan and Lynch, Hamilton "fundamentally reshaped Scottish politics" (2001, p.284); Finlay (1997) entitles his chapter on the period 'The rise and fall of the SNP 1967-79'. There is a similar contemporaneous perspective. With typical self-effacement, Tam Dalyell references the surprisingly high SNP vote at the 1962 West Lothian by-election (which he won) as an early indicator of SNP revival. However, he describes Hamilton as "the crucial breakthrough that began the process...whereby the SNP ceased to be something of a joke party and...[became] a serious political force" (1977, p.64).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> As important figures are mentioned, short biographical footnotes are provided so as not to distract from the narrative. Dr Winifred Ewing (1929- ) is "one of the best known names and faces of post-war Scottish politics" and "a Nationalist Icon" (Hassan & Lynch, 2001, p.284). Ewing lost Hamilton in the 1970 General Election, was elected as MP for Moray and Nairn in February 1974 but lost this seat in the 1979 election. A nominated member of the European Parliament from 1975, Ewing won election as MEP for the Highlands and Islands in the first election to that body in 1979. Ewing remained an MEP until 1999, earning the nickname 'Madam Ecosse' for her nationalism and longevity in the Parliament. At the first Scottish Parliament elections, Ewing was elected as a Highlands and Islands List-MSP and, as the oldest elected MSP and acting Presiding Officer, officially declared the Scottish Parliament open.

<sup>24</sup> Tam Dalyell (1932- ) tenth Baronet of the Binns, MP for West Lothian (1962-1983) and the successor seat of Linlithgow (1983-2005). An active campaigner and frequent rebel on many issues, Dalyell has been most prominent in his opposition to devolution, so much so that in the 1997 devolution referendum, when previously anti-devolutionist Labour colleagues had altered their views, Dalyell was the only Scottish Labour MP actively campaigning for a 'No, No' vote. However, contrary to the claim of Hassan and Lynch that he was willing "to ally himself with the Conservative front of an anti-devolution campaign" (2001, p.205), Dalyell refused to share a platform with this 'Think Twice' organisation. A distinctive figure, Harvie wittily captures his "amazing combination of the folksy and the Olympian - 'yes, I'm glad you asked me about extra taxation, Betty, because as Willy Brandt told me...'" (1999, p.165)

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Until the 1960s, Hutchison notes, the SNP were perceived as “little more than an engaging eccentric fringe party with few serious electoral pretensions” (2001, p.119).<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the imposition of tighter party discipline, organisational renovation and policy development after 1945 (by Convenors Dr. Robert Macintyre, Arthur Donaldson and then William Wolfe) would benefit the party after their breakthrough in Hamilton.<sup>26</sup> While there had been prior indications of increasing SNP electoral support, Hamilton ensured sustained political attention and pushed “the constitutional question to the centre of Scottish politics” (Hassan & Lynch, 2001, p.284). The SNP sought to sustain their success, in 1969, by strategically renouncing “separatism and isolation as outdated concepts” and accepting that economic interdependence was “obviously essential” (Mitchell, 1996a, p.207). However, this had little impact.

Before 1967, the last sustained examination of Scottish government was Lord Balfour’s Royal Commission on Scottish Affairs, which reported in 1954. While devolution was excluded from its terms of reference, Balfour advocated further increases in administrative

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<sup>25</sup> The SNP’s only previous national success had been winning the 1945 Motherwell by-election victory, during the wartime electoral truce between the main parties. The seat was lost at the General Election one month later.

<sup>26</sup> For more on SNP development see Mitchell (1996a). 1960s reforms by Donaldson and Wolfe focused on rationalising the party structure, building membership and expanding branch structures. From 1000 members and 20 branches in 1960, the SNP claimed 125,000 members and 470 branches in 1969 (Kemp, 1993, p.99), when Wolfe became Convenor. They also sought a coherent policy package. William Wolfe (1924- ) contested the 1962 West Lothian by-election gaining a creditable 23% of the vote, and mounted seven unsuccessful attempts to unseat the victor, Dalyell. He also unsuccessfully contested the North Edinburgh by-election in 1973. More importantly, his Convenorship from 1969 marked an SNP move to the left and brought to the fore a number of young enthusiastic left wing nationalists, such as Isobel Lindsay and Stephen Maxwell, who would play an important role in developing policy and the adoption of modern campaigning techniques.

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autonomy through the Scottish Office.<sup>27</sup> By the 1960s, indeed, the Scottish Office had become the central focus of Scottish politics. As Mitchell states: “[t]he post war Scottish Office resembled a mini-Whitehall in Scotland but the link with London remained powerful and the degree of autonomy was severely circumscribed” (1996a, p.88). The role of government, under both Labour and the Conservatives, was increasingly to co-ordinate regional policy and economic planning. This was important, as Scotland was particularly dependant on declining heavy industries. Commitment to planning was especially prominent after the 1964 General Election, which saw the election of Harold Wilson as Prime Minister on a promise to bring ‘the white heat of the technological revolution’ to bear on Britain’s problems.<sup>28</sup> Thus, public expenditure in Scotland between 1964 and 1973 increased by an impressive 900% (Devine, 1999, p.579) and this period was marked by large scale planning decisions, such as the establishment of the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) in 1965 and Dounreay nuclear power plant in 1966. The dominant political figure in Scotland, as well as within Scottish Labour, who oversaw much of this from 1964 was Wilson’s close political associate and Secretary of State for Scotland, William (‘Willie’) Ross, MP for Kilmarnock.<sup>29</sup> Ross set the tone for Scottish

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<sup>27</sup> The Scottish Office was the department of UK government that implemented government policy in Scotland pre-devolution. It was created as the department of the newly created ‘Secretary for Scotland’ in 1885, a post elevated to the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Scotland in 1926. Since its creation the Scottish Office has accumulated powers. Particularly important was the expansion in 1939 when, as well as greatly increasing its responsibilities, the department transferred to Edinburgh from London. The department continues to exist, as the Scotland Office, responsible for reserved matters. On Scottish Office development see Mitchell (2003).

<sup>28</sup> Harold Wilson (1916-1995) was Labour MP for Ormskirk, and later Huyton, Liverpool. He was President of the Board of Trade (1947-1951) and Leader of the Labour party (1963-1976). He won four elections (1964, 1966, February 1974 and October 1974), the only Labour leader to do so. Wilson was created Baron of Rievaulx in 1983.

<sup>29</sup> William Ross (1911-1988) was Secretary of State for Scotland (1964-1970; 1974-1976). In our period the other Scottish Secretaries were the Conservatives’ Gordon Campbell (1970-74) and Labour’s Bruce Millan (1976-79).

politics in this period, a tone that George Younger characterises as “most massively boring” (Kemp, 1993, p.109).<sup>30</sup> Aitken describes Ross as:

“a grim-faced, gruff-spoken former dominie for whom the word dour might have been custom built...the archetypal Presbyterian Elder...severe on frippery and indulgence, and guided by a personal code that leavened the Old Testament with Burns rather than Bob Dylan...during eight unchallenged years in the job [Ross] became the closest approximation yet to a Prime Minister of Scotland (so much so that when the Scottish Office’s hideous premises at New St Andrews House were being fitted out in the early 1970s, the workmen daubed the walls of the biggest ministerial chamber ‘Willie’s room’ – Labour was in opposition at the time” (1997, pp.196-197).

Ross conducted Scottish politics as a fiefdom, ensuring a measure of Scottish political distinctiveness, such that Richard Crossman in his *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister* records that “Willie Ross and his friends accuse the Scottish Nationalists of separatism but what Willie Ross himself actually likes is to keep Scottish business absolutely privy from English business” (Keating, 1989b, p.98). Ross’s cabinet colleague Barbara Castle referred to him as “Tartan Willie” (Sillars, 1986, p.26), and the (then) SNP’s Margo MacDonald comments: “Willie Ross was actually the biggest nationalist and chauvinist you could ever find...Willie was quite shameless at playing the Scottish Card” (Kemp, 1993, p.109). The

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<sup>30</sup> Sir George Younger (1931-2003) was MP for Ayr (1964-1992), Secretary of State for Scotland (1979-1986) and Secretary of State for Defence (1986-1989). He was created a life peer, Viscount Younger of Prestwick in 1992, and became the Hereditary 4<sup>th</sup> Viscount Younger of Leckie in 1998.

use to which Ross put the 'Scottish card' was the achievement of economic concessions for Scotland. Kemp argues Ross used the 'politics of grievance' to lever concessions, as illustrated by his advice to a speechwriter: "just say everything is looking grim" (1993, p.109). Younger notes the possibly self-defeating effects of such tactics, creating a sense of economic failure from which the SNP especially could benefit (Kemp, 1993, p.110).

By 1967 the Scottish Conservatives were at the beginning of a slow decline, easily seen in retrospect but not so evident at the time. The Conservatives were still a significant political force, although not as significant as they had been as the Scottish Unionists in the 1950s.<sup>31</sup> However, by 1967 Labour was the majority party of Scottish politics in terms of seats held.<sup>32</sup> As Hutchison notes, the return of Labour governments in 1964 and both 1974 elections "owed a great deal to the Scottish contingent" of MPs (2001, p.99). Indeed, in all General Elections since 1959 except February and October 1974, the Labour party has done better in Scotland than in England. Nevertheless, according to Wood, Scottish Labour "had a strong Scottish accent, but it spoke the same language" as the English party (Wood, 1989, p.48). Early Labour's devolution commitment had been formally abandoned by our period and Ross staunchly opposed devolution as well as Nationalism, routinely referring

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<sup>31</sup> The Scottish Conservatives were the 'Scottish Unionist Party' from 1912 until 1965 when the party became the 'Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party'. On reasons for the decline of the Scottish Conservatives see Hutchison (2001); Mitchell (1990); McCrone (1992; 2001); Seawright (1999).

<sup>32</sup> The Scottish Labour Party only became the official name of the party in Scotland in 1994. From the establishment of Labour's constitution in 1918 the party in Scotland was officially the Labour Party (Great Britain) Scottish Council, one of eighteen British regional councils. However, "whatever the formal constitution laid down, the party in Scotland has at certain times acted as a fairly autonomous body. This tension between the formal and informal constitution of Scottish Labour resembles what is a feature in the Constitution of the state itself" (Wood, 1989, p.48). For clarity, party documents are referenced according to colloquial party name (Labour, Conservative, Liberal, SNP, SLP) rather than official party name, unless the form of party name given or author is relevant to the meaning of the text. The bibliography lists primary sources by party.

to the SNP as the 'Scottish Narks Party' and earning the soubriquet 'Hammer of the Nats'.<sup>33</sup> Scottish Conservatives shared this opposition. In so far as there was a 'Butskellite' consensus in the UK, the Scottish version was an agreement on the existing constitutional structure and the role of government in promoting economic planning.

In contrast, the Liberal party had been committed to UK federalism ('home rule all round') since Gladstone split the nineteenth century Liberal party over his conversion to home rule in 1886. Harvie notes that after the resignation of Jo Grimond, the Orkney and Shetland MP who led the Liberal party during its 1960s resurgence, the Scottish Liberals were led by more Westminster-oriented figures such as Russell Johnston and David Steel, and so were unable to capitalise on this longstanding commitment (Harvie, 1995, p.177; see also Hutchison, 2001, p.119).<sup>34</sup> This may be unfair: Hanham identifies Steel and Johnston as pro-home rulers who made the issue their own, through Johnston sponsoring a 1966 home rule Bill and the publication by Steel of an influential assessment of the case for home rule

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<sup>33</sup> A title, ironically, also associated with Ross's protégé Jim Sillars, before his defection from Labour in 1976.

<sup>34</sup> Russell Johnston (1932- ) was MP for Inverness (1964-1983) and the successor seat of Inverness East Nairn and Lochaber (1983-1997), Chairman of the Scottish Liberal party (1970-1974), leader of the Scottish Liberal party (1974-1988), deputy leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats (1988-1989) and of the UK Liberal Democrats (1988-1992). Johnston was created Baron of Minginish in Highland in 1997. David Steel (1938- ) was MP for Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles from (1965-1983), and the successor seat, Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (1987-1997). Steel supported a range of liberal causes including successfully promoting the Bill to legalise abortion in the UK. He was leader of the UK Liberal party (1976-1988), including the period of the 'Lib-Lab pact' with Labour in 1977 and the 'alliance' with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) after 1981, which would lead to a 1988 merger of the two parties to form the Liberal Democrats. Steel was created the Rt. Hon. Lord Steel of Aikenwood after retiring from the Commons. In 1999 he was elected as Lothian List-MSP to the Scottish Parliament, and by acclamation as the Parliament's first Presiding Officer. Lord Steel retired from the Scottish Parliament in 2003. Steel was Joint Chair, with Lord Harry Ewing, of the Scottish Constitutional Convention (1989-1995).

(1969, p.191). Nevertheless, even with their 1960s UK revival, the Liberals remained a minor party.<sup>35</sup> However, their contribution to the constitutional discourse is notable.

### **§3.2. The Developing Politico/Socio-Economic Context.**

The economic planning role of the state was widely accepted but the conditions for planning were difficult. Scotland was undergoing many of the same processes as countries throughout the developed world in the last fifty years, including radical changes in social and economic structure. Devine argues that “the great fact of Scottish economic history in the twentieth century was the erosion and then the elimination of that heavy industrial structure” which was the bedrock of the Scottish economy (1996, p.2), particularly the disintegration of ‘staple industries’ from the 1970s upon which, in retrospect, Scotland had been over-reliant, and a comparative lack of compensatory service sector development (Devine, 1996, pp.2-3). This was the major problem with which regional planning had to contend, with effects on the general economic mood as well as upon measurable factors like employment, which remained higher in Scotland than the UK average for most of the twentieth century (Devine, 1996, p.2). Hanham notes high Scottish emigration, of evident concern throughout the period, as an “indicator of Scottish morale” (1969, p.181). Such changes obviously impacted on Scotland’s social structure, with the resulting increase in geographical and social mobility furthering trends of secularisation, suburbanisation and the decreasing strength of traditional political and social ties.

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<sup>35</sup>After an initial surge of support, the Liberal party lost the ‘third party vote’ and a number of high profile activists, such as broadcaster Ludovic Kennedy (who endorsed Ewing in Hamilton), to the SNP (Harvie, 1995, p.177).

## The Scottish Constitutional Debate 1967 - 1979

Ross “mercilessly used the danger of a nationalist upsurge to screw more money out of the Cabinet and by the late 1960s, government expenditure per head in Scotland was running at twenty per cent above the average” (Finlay, 1997, p.148), but bad industrial relations and poor planning merely increased reliance on government expenditure. The 1970 Conservative government’s neo-liberalism quickly failed as the government succumbed to pressure to subsidise the failing Rolls Royce company and, in the Scottish context, over the 1971 receivership of the UCS shipworks on the Clyde with the possible loss of 8,500 jobs. Refusal of government help led to the UCS ship-worker's strike, led by Communist shop stewards Jimmy Airlie and Jimmy Reid, which achieved a high level of Scottish popular support and, according to Hutchison, “underlined the apparent indifference of the Tories to systematic Scottish economic problems, while the mass campaign of the shipyard workers against closure galvanised popular support in the west of Scotland against the government” (2001, p.105). The government’s subsequent capitulation and bailout of UCS was of little help in dispelling this image. Ongoing industrial disputes throughout Britain led to the introduction of a three day week in 1973, while a high rate of inflation and Balance of Payments deficit led to the wage restraint policies which further damaged the government’s economic record. The 1974 Labour government’s ongoing economic problems resulted in Chancellor Dennis Healey applying for an IMF loan and industrial disputes, often dubbed the ‘winter of discontent’, which provided the immediate context of the 1979 devolution referendum.



## The Development of a Discourse Community

International economic events also had significant internal effects on Scotland. There was evident concern throughout the period of a decline in indigenous Scottish business ownership, particularly to London. Devine notes that in 1970 approximately 60% of Scottish manufacturing employment was concentrated in factories where ownership lay outside of Scotland (1996, p.4). This concern was also reflected in government efforts to divert investment to Scotland through regional policy; Scottish Council (Development and Industry) attempts to promote inward investment from the USA and Canada to balance London influence; the creation of the HIDB; and the creation of the Scottish Development Agency (SDA) in 1975. This issue played into debates on industrial decline and created frequently voiced fears that Scotland was becoming a 'branch plant economy'.

The most important economic development in this period, however, was the discovery of North Sea oil. Although discovered in 1970, the North Sea oil industry only began to produce in bulk from 1975 (Lynch, 1992, p.446). Nevertheless, the SNP was quick to skilfully capitalise on the discovery, asserting the potential that oil offered as a solution to Scotland's economic problems. They most visibly did this with the slogan 'It's Scotland's Oil', and posters comparing the 'rich Scot' and 'poor Briton' (Lynch, 1992, p.446). This campaign was pioneered in two November 1973 by-elections in Edinburgh North and Glasgow Govan. Margo Macdonald won Govan giving another boost to the SNP, frightening the main parties, and foreshadowing the 1974 General Elections.<sup>36</sup> The precise

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<sup>36</sup> MacDonald lost Govan in February 1974. Hassan and Lynch note that Margo MacDonald (1944- ) "may only have been an SNP MP for four months, but the result shook Scottish Politics and Labour to the core. Since then MacDonald has become a Nationalist Icon alongside Winnie Ewing and Jim Sillars, to whom she later married" (2001, p.292). A leading member of the left wing '79 group, formed after the 1979 devolution

economics of these arguments were contested, as the economics of nationalism had earlier been criticised by Professor Gavin McCrone (1969). Hanham, however, makes a common complaint that “[t]he economic rights and wrongs of these...arguments were difficult to disentangle because there are no adequate Scottish financial and economic statistics on which to base a serious evaluation” (1969, p.182). Nevertheless, it is often claimed that oil gave some psychological credibility to SNP claims of the economic viability of independence (Bennie et al, 1997, p.9), particularly as the price of oil was raised by the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict. Another effect of oil on Scottish political discourse is illustrated by John McGrath’s play, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil*, performed by the socialist 7:84 theatre company, which used oil to make class points rather than nationalist arguments, demonstrating that the significance of oil spread beyond the SNP to become part of general debate upon the political left. That the play was performed, and received a standing ovation, at the SNP’s 1974 party conference (Harvie, 1995, p.186), suggests an appeal to both nationalist and socialist audiences.<sup>37</sup>

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referendum to persuade the SNP to make a left wing appeal to Labour voters, MacDonald resigned from the SNP when Convenor Gordon Wilson proscribed internal factions and expelled a number of '79 group members from the party. Having rejoined the SNP she was elected as Lothians List-MSP to the Scottish Parliament in 1999. A ‘fundamentalist’ rather than ‘gradualist’ with a significant media profile and high public recognition, MacDonald proved a maverick member of the SNP group and eventually resigned from the party in acrimonious circumstances. MacDonald won re-election to the Scottish Parliament as an Independent Lothians List-MSP in 2003.

<sup>37</sup> This 1973 socialist play recounts Highland history from 1746 and the Clearances to 1974 and the exploitation of North Sea oil. Structured as a Highland ceilidh, its central theme is that Highlanders have been dispossessed and disenfranchised, do not own their own land and have little say in its use. The Labour Government is presented as little different from the Conservatives, with both unwilling to offend big business, which may partly explain the positive reception which the play received at the 1974 SNP conference. Henceforth, this play will be referenced as *The Cheviot*.

### §3.3. The Developing Constitutional Debate.

The new interest in Scottish politics occasioned by Hamilton was evident in increased media interest after the by-election. Harvie notes that to the SNP, “[t]he media now become almost indulgent” (1995, p.179), as Ewing wrote a daily column in the *Daily Record*; the *Daily Express*, reminiscent of its past nationalism under Lord Beaverbrook, reported regularly on her activities in Westminster; and the *Scotsman* published a series of pro-federalist editorials.<sup>38</sup> Both BBC Scotland and STV began to transmit Scottish political programmes in 1967/8 and it was only in the 1970s that *The Scotsman* appointed a Scottish political editor. As Drucker notes, “[t]hat [Neal] Ascherson, a man who had left an international reputation on the staff of the *Observer* should choose to return to Scotland at this point was itself an indication of the news value now attached to Scottish politics” (1978, p.41). This coverage raised the profile of the SNP, who by 1968 had the largest party membership in Scotland (Hutchison, 2001, p.119).

Just as significant is Hamilton’s impact on the political parties. The new political prominence of the SNP and the heightened interest this created in Scotland’s constitutional position certainly forced the other political parties to react. Finlay argues that this was the main impact of the early period of SNP successes, given relative SNP failure at the 1970 General Election (Finlay, 1997, p.149). Whether these reactions occurred due to a need to

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<sup>38</sup> These editorials were republished as collectively as a pamphlet. This pamphlet is stamped as having been deposited with the National Library of Scotland in 1969, although their computerised records date the pamphlet to 1970. Given this confusion as to publication date, this source will be referenced according to the year of the publication of the original editorials: *The Scotsman* (1968).

respond to the principled concerns reflected by SNP success, or tactical considerations as many suspected, is less important here than the effects.

The Scottish Conservatives were first to react, their position in opposition providing the freedom and strategic necessity to act. Unofficially, a number of broadly pro-devolution young Conservatives established the 'Thistle Group' to promote more Scottish-centred policies.<sup>39</sup> Officially, an internal committee was established to examine the issue. Following this committee's recommendations, Leader of the Opposition Edward Heath, in his 'Declaration of Perth' to the 1968 Scottish Conservative party conference, established a constitutional committee.<sup>40</sup> In 1970 this committee, under former Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home, reported in favour of a measure of devolution.<sup>41</sup> Heath's shift to a more devolutionary stance was imposed on a largely hostile party: as Lynch notes, the declaration, "consigned the party to eleven years of internal squabbling over the issue" (1992, p.445).

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<sup>39</sup> The Thistle Group included (future Lord Advocate) Peter Fraser; (future Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Conservative party) Michael Ancram and Malcolm Rifkind (see below). They wanted the party "to drop the image of the grouse moor...modernise itself...[and] demonstrate...commitment to a Scottish personality and agenda" (Finlay, 1997, p.107).

<sup>40</sup> Edward Heath (1916-2005) was MP for Bexley (1950-1974) and Old Bexley and Sidcup (1974-2001). He was appointed Chief Whip and Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (1955), Minister of Labour and Lord Privy Seal (1960) and Secretary of State for Industry, Trade and Development and President of the Board of Trade (1963). He became the first elected (rather than 'chosen') Conservative leader in 1965 and was Prime Minister (1970-1974).

<sup>41</sup> The Home Committee proposed establishing a directly elected 'Scottish Convention' as a forum for voicing Scottish opinion and dealing with stages of Scottish Westminster legislation. Sir Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home (1903-1995) was elected MP for Lanark in 1931. In 1951 he succeeded his father as 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Home. He was appointed Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (1955), Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Lords (1957-1960) and Foreign Secretary (1960). In 1963 he became Conservative Leader and Prime Minister, renouncing his peerage and winning election as MP in a by-election in Kinross and West Perth. However, his premiership was short-lived, as the Conservatives lost the General Election in 1964. In 1974 Home was created Baron Home of the Hirsle of Coldstream. The Home Committee report will henceforth be referenced as Home (1970).

## The Development of a Discourse Community

Many in the Labour party thought SNP success represented short-term economic protest and no immediate response was forthcoming. In 1969, however, PM Harold Wilson established a Royal Commission on the Constitution to examine possible constitutional changes within the UK.<sup>42</sup> This Commission was widely interpreted as intended to remove devolution from the forthcoming General Election and halt SNP momentum (Harvie, 1995, p.207).<sup>43</sup> This forestalled the need for Labour to change its policy, and its submission to Kilbrandon (Labour, 1970) maintained an anti-devolutionist stance. Indeed, as late as 1973 Labour's Scottish General Secretary could claim that Labour was the only party defending the status quo (Lynch, 1992, p.445).<sup>44</sup> Opinions within Labour were divided between centralists such as the, until 1973, fiercely anti-nationalist Jim Sillars who co-authored a pamphlet in 1968 arguing against 'separatism' (Drucker, 1978, p.13), and 'maximalist' devolutionists such as JP Mackintosh.<sup>45</sup> The publication of Mackintosh's *The Devolution of Power* (1968) was, to a number of Labour devolutionists:

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<sup>42</sup> First chaired by Lord Crowley and, after his death, Lord Kilbrandon. Ross's initial opposition to the appointment of this Royal Commission was reversed on the condition that it examine the constitution of the UK rather than only Scotland's constitutional position (Kemp, 1993, pp.115-116).

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, after all, famously said that Royal Commissions were only good for "spending years taking minutes" (Devine, 1999, p.575). This Royal Commission will be referenced as Kilbrandon (1973a) and the dissenting report as Kilbrandon (1973b).

<sup>44</sup> 'Status quo' throughout the thesis, as within the debate, refers to the pre-devolutionary political system.

<sup>45</sup> 'Maximalism' was the desire to see devolution of the maximum amount of power consistent with the maintenance of the UK. John Pitcairn Mackintosh (1921–1978), politician and academic, was MP for Berwick and East Lothian (1966–February 1974; October 1974–1978). He held academic posts at the Universities of Glasgow; Ibadad, Nigeria; Strathclyde; Birckbeck College London and Edinburgh where he was Lecturer 1954–1966 and Professor of Politics and Head of the Department of Politics from 1977. He authored a number of respected works including seminal works on the British Cabinet and British politics (1962; 1970), devolution (1968), Nigerian politics (1966), and posthumous collections of papers (Drucker (ed.), 1982 and Marquand (ed.), 1982). Mackintosh was almost universally acknowledged as one of Scotland's most gifted, eloquent, and respected politicians. His premature death was widely perceived as a severe blow to devolutionists in the referendum as well as a loss to Scottish politics and public life more generally.

“a seminal event...He incisively linked the increased concern at the inability of Westminster to deal adequately with the specific needs of Scotland to the desire for greater democratic control of the executive. By the early 1970s these ideas had been taken up by the rising generation of modernising Labour figures in Scotland: most notably John Smith, Jim Sillars, Harry Ewing and Gordon Brown” (Harvie, 1995, p.130).<sup>46</sup>

Whether or not Kilbrandon was intended to defuse the issue, it did so in the short term; the 1970 General Election was largely fought on traditional economic and class issues favouring the two main parties. Despite apparent nationalist momentum, and possibly because of its effects on the policies of the other parties, the SNP failed to meet expectations. This was despite achieving its best General Election result to that date.<sup>47</sup> However, the discovery of oil, and Kilbrandon’s report (1973a; 1973b) resurrected the constitutional issue and the SNP, who in 1974 saw another surge of support. While SNP success continued to give the constitutional debate impetus, the terms of the debate in the

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<sup>46</sup> John Smith MP (1938–1994), Labour MP for North Lanarkshire (1970–1983) and Monklands East (1983–1994). As Minister for the Privy Council Office (1976–1978), he piloted the Scotland Act 1978 through the House of Commons and later famously described devolution as “unfinished business” (Hassan & Lynch, 2001, p.410). He was Secretary of State for Trade (1978–1979) and leader of the Labour party (1992–1994). Jim Sillars (1937– ) was Labour MP for South Ayrshire (1970–1976), one of the safest Labour seats in Scotland. He defected to form the ‘Scottish Labour Party’ in 1976, and remained as the SLP MP for South Ayrshire (1976–1979). He joined the SNP in 1980 and was SNP MP for Glasgow Govan (1988–1992). Harry Ewing (1931– ), Labour MP for Stirling, Falkirk & Grangemouth (1971–1983), and Falkirk East (1983–1992). He was an undersecretary at the Scottish Office (1976–1979), involved in the development of the Scotland Act 1978. He was created Lord Ewing of Kirkford in 1992, and co-chaired the Scottish Constitutional Convention (1988–1996). Gordon Brown MP (1951– ) was the first student to hold the post of Rector of Edinburgh University (1972–75), Lecturer at Edinburgh University and Glasgow College (1975–1980), and has been Labour MP for Dunfermline East since 1983. Since 1997 he has been Chancellor of the Exchequer.

<sup>47</sup> The SNP won 11% throughout Scotland, and although they lost Hamilton, won the Western Isles - the first seat the party had won at a General Election. However, the new MP proved to be a ‘constituency MP’, less willing to undertake wider duties as Ewing had (Mitchell, 1996a, p.205).

## The Development of a Discourse Community

late 1970s were set not merely by the SNP, but by Kilbrandon and the implications of oil. While the discovery of oil sharpened economic debates, Kilbrandon in particular moved the debate from the merits of devolution to what *kind* of devolution should be implemented. Kilbrandon reported in October 1973, two years later than intended, in favour of devolution to Scotland and Wales although with no agreement as to its precise form.<sup>48</sup> As Hutchison notes:

“[i]f as many suspected, Wilson hoped the whole question would disappear, the publication of the Kilbrandon report could not have been less timely...coming as it did on the eve of the 1974 elections, and substantially endorsing the case for devolution” (2001, p.130).

Dalyell, in contrast, argues that McDonald’s victory at Govan, within weeks of the publication of Kilbrandon, was more important: “voluminous government reports seldom capture the public imagination to the same extent” as a surprise election result (1977, p.13). Harvie argues Kilbrandon’s conclusions were neither “distinct nor unambiguous” and that the reactions to Kilbrandon defy traditional political divides: supporters, at least initially, included the Conservatives, Liberals and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and the Kirk, while Labour and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) opposed Kilbrandon, although with divisions

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<sup>48</sup> The Commission proposed legislative devolution to the UK’s ‘historic nations’ but was unable to form a consensus on the exact form. Two members of the Commission, Professor Alan Peacock (Liberal, member of the Institute for Economic Affairs and, later, economic advisor to PM Margaret Thatcher) and Lord Crowther-Hunt (later devolution advisor to the 1974-9 Labour government) produced a minority report arguing that the majority scheme was constitutionally unstable and proposing the alternative of devolution throughout the UK.

within each group (1995, p.187). Lynch suggests that, divided on the question, the Kilbrandon Commission's lack of agreement on a positive scheme provided the Conservatives with an escape route from their tenuous support for devolution (1992, p.445). The election of Margaret Thatcher as Conservative leader in 1975, indeed, did ensure Conservative movement away from devolution. Suspicious of attempts at constitutional tinkering, Thatcher retained the policy, but gradually moved the party away from wholehearted commitment. The party's opposition to the government's devolution legislation (although not, explicitly, the principle of devolution) prompted the resignation of Shadow Scottish Secretary Alick Buchanan-Smith and his deputy Malcolm Rifkind. However, this only served to reinforce opposition as Thatcher replaced the pro-devolution Buchanan-Smith with the populist anti-devolutionist Teddy Taylor.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the Conservatives were not well placed to respond, having failed to implement Home's 'Scottish Convention'. Rather than pre-empting Kilbrandon, the Conservative 1970-74 government had pursued local government reform based on another of Wilson's Royal Commission's reports, under Lord Wheatley. This was seen as a way to respond to desire for 'less remote' government short of devolution. While this did not rule out devolution, some argued that local government reform should acknowledge the prospect of devolution.

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<sup>49</sup> Alick Buchanan-Smith was MP for Aberdeenside and Kincardineshire (1964-1991), a "centrist and popular Conservative" (Hassan & Lynch, 2001, p.15). Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG (1946- ) was Conservative MP for Edinburgh Pentlands (1974-1997). After 1979 the pro-devolutionist Rifkind accepted government office on the basis that if so many Scots were too apathetic to turn out to support devolution in order to meet the requirement of the '40% rule' in 1979 (see below), then devolution was a lost cause. He was Secretary of State for Scotland (1986-90); Secretary of State for Transport (1990-2); Secretary of State for Defence (1992-5), and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1995-7). Rifkind lost his seat in 1997, was subsequently knighted and became honorary President of the Scottish Conservatives. Rather than accept the Peerage conventionally offered to such a distinguished politician or accept a safe English constituency, he unsuccessfully sought to return to Westminster by contesting his old seat in 2001. Rifkind was elected as MP for the safe English seat of Kensington and Chelsea at the 2005 General Election; Sir Teddy Taylor (1937- ) was Conservative MP for Glasgow Cathcart (1964-1979), and Southend East and the successor seat of Rochford and South End (1980-2005).



## The Development of a Discourse Community

Criticism of a potential conflict was particularly marked given Wheatley's recommendation of a two-tier structure of Regional and District councils, raising the prospect of 'over-government'.

Labour divisions were revealed in response to Kilbrandon. Ross, again Scottish Secretary after February 1974, remained opposed to devolution while, for example, the STUC supported it.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Labour's immediate response was to prevaricate and the February 1974 election manifesto contained no devolution commitment. However, the SNP made advances in both 1974 General Elections, gaining 21.9% and then 30.4%, and winning seven then eleven seats respectively.<sup>51</sup> In vote-share the SNP became the second party in Scotland. Although Labour was returned to power in February 1974, it achieved only a small majority and so was increasingly dependant on Scottish seats. For months after the October elections, polls showed the SNP with majority support in Scotland and the presence of a group of SNP MPs in a parliament with a small, and later no, government majority ensured both a platform and some influence.

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<sup>50</sup> The STUC is significant within the debate and Scottish politics generally. Aitken notes it has been, "almost from its inception, much more significant politically than it has been industrially" (1997, p.2) and that "the home rule cause itself was adopted (or rather re-adopted) by the STUC in 1968, fully six years before the Labour party, alarmed by a suddenly resurgent SNP, formally took the point" (1997, p.27). Unions, in their affiliation to Labour, were important in Labour's conversion to devolution. On the STUC see Aitken (1997).

<sup>51</sup> Labour emphasised that SNP gains were largely in Conservative seats, suggesting they were 'Tartan Tories'. However, one of the SNP's problems was a weak ideological profile with, for example, such ideologically diverse MPs as Hamish Watt (a former Conservative) and George Reid (a former Labour supporter).

The government had responded to Kilbrandon by publishing a consultation paper. Despite some opposition from within Labour's Scottish Council, the Cabinet was determined to push ahead with a devolution commitment given SNP resurgence in February 1974 and particularly as the small Labour majority meant a second election would soon be required. Such a commitment was placed in the October 1974 General Election manifesto. Nevertheless, the issue continued to divide Scottish Labour: at a meeting of the Labour Scottish Executive in June 1974 all five options in the government consultation paper were rejected in favour of a statement that "[c]onstitutional tinkering does not make a meaningful contribution towards achieving socialist objectives" (Harvie, 1995, p.189). In response, the UK National Executive Committee ordered a special conference, at which the 'STUC block vote' was key to winning Scottish Labour's acceptance of devolution (Devine, 1999, p.576). The subsequent government White Paper, *Our Changing Democracy* (Her Majesty's Government, 1975) disappointed many, given the limited powers of the proposed Scottish Assembly, particularly in economic matters.<sup>52</sup> According to Lynch, it "gave the assembly a mixed bag of responsibilities without real power, either over the limits of its autonomy or finance" (1992, p.446), while Harvie argues that it was "more the product of an interdepartmental power struggle" than a principled scheme, and the response to it was generally muted (1995, p.191).

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<sup>52</sup> Ross, for example, ensured that the SDA would remain responsible to Parliament and not the Assembly, although this was changed during debate on the legislation. *Our Changing Democracy* will henceforth be referenced as HMG (1975).

## The Development of a Discourse Community

The exception was Jim Sillars. Disappointment with the White Paper, and UK endorsement of EEC membership in the 1975 referendum, impelled Sillars to break from the Labour party, along with Paisley MP John Robertson. Sillars formed his own 'Scottish Labour Party' (SLP) in 1976.<sup>53</sup> Sillars, "widely regarded as one of the ablest of the rising generation of Labour politicians" (Hutchison, 2001, p.137), believed that, given the seeming inevitability of a Scottish Assembly, Labour had to be prepared to fight the SNP in the new, purely Scottish, context, and this required both that the assembly should have 'real economic teeth', and that the party in Scotland must be autonomous. It is disputed to what extent the split was premeditated: Drucker (1978) asserts a yearlong series of planning meetings, while Sillars asserts that it was an "emotional response, born of disgust. Our intentions were pure but in timing, strategy and tactics we did everything wrong...we acted from principle and did not stop to scheme and plot" (1986, pp.57-58). Whatever the truth, the acrimony of the split and the eventual defeat of devolution meant that Sillars's ideas could not be realised. Nevertheless, the creation of the SLP enervated the debate on the left between nationalists and socialists, seeking, as it did, to combine the two. As Drucker asked presciently, "[t]he SLP was created to combine socialism and nationalism in a new party. Will the gap it sought to fill remain vacant for long?" (1978, pp.2-3)

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<sup>53</sup> Sillars (1986) notes that *The Scotsman's* political correspondent Neal Ascherson suggested the party name. This indicates the party's good relationship with the press. Ascherson, indeed, wrote an article hailing Sillars as a future Prime Minister of Scotland, with the exhortation that while "Willie Ross may cut him in the corridors...the fans at Wembley changed their chants to 'Sillars, Sillars!' when they caught sight of him. A new Scotland is coming, and Jim Sillars, who doesn't like losing an argument and has gambled his political life on this one, will surely be one of its leaders" (Drucker, 1978, p.45). Drucker rather dismissively notes that the SLP was helped by "the flattering and intense publicity it received" (1978, p.2).

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Initially, Sillars had hoped the SLP could be the representative of Labour in Scotland and dual membership with Labour would be possible. However, acrimony between the two parties eventually led the SLP to move from supporting devolution to advocating independence. Nevertheless, the SLP failed to attract a significant level of support: “beyond Sillars’ own South Ayrshire constituency base, the SLP attracted mainly university graduates, and a smattering of intellectuals - notably journalists and lecturers - hitherto somewhat aloof from the Scottish Labour party” (Hutchison, 2001, p.137). Labour voters largely remained loyal and the SLP eventually disintegrated after International Marxist Group entryism (see Drucker, 1978). Nevertheless, while it is easy to dismiss the SLP as “an ephemeral grouping prone to Marxist infiltration that only lasted for three years” (Devine, 1999, p.586), and while it demonstrates Labour divisions, the intellectual-heavy make-up of the party well suited them to impact on Scottish political discourse, if not the electoral scene.<sup>54</sup> Further, it elevated the European element of the debate, although the significance of this would not become fully apparent until later.<sup>55</sup>

Labour began to recover electorally from 1978, for example winning the Glasgow Garscadden by-election that year.<sup>56</sup> However, while public opinion was moving outside Parliament, devolution remained a government commitment that had to be passed with a narrow government majority and all parties split on devolution. Even the SNP group was divided on the issue between ‘freedom first’ opponents of devolution as not good enough

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<sup>54</sup> Sillars later move to the SNP arguably placed him in a position where he could do both.

<sup>55</sup> The 1988 adoption of the ‘Scotland in Europe’ policy by the SNP, championed by Sillars in his victorious 1988 Glasgow Govan by-election campaign, signals this increased significance.

<sup>56</sup> Electing Donald Dewar (1937–2001) who would become Secretary of State for Scotland (1997-1999) and the first First Minister of Scotland from 1999 until his death in 2001.

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and those who saw devolution as a useful move towards independence. Further, by 1977 a now minority Labour government was dependent on Liberal support. In 1977 a government attempt to limit debate on the *Scotland and Wales Bill* was defeated by a combination of Conservative opposition and Labour backbench rebellion. The government then produced separate bills for Scotland and Wales. Throughout this process, in response to a concerted campaign by opponents of devolution from both sides of the House, the government was forced to make a number of concessions including a post-legislative referendum. George Cunningham, a Scot sitting as Labour MP for the English seat of Islington South and Finsbury (Bochel et al, 1979, p.7), successfully introduced an amendment requiring 40% of the eligible electorate to vote in favour of devolution in the referendum. This so called '40% rule' was symbolically passed on Burns Night, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1978, with 80% of MPs sitting for Scottish constituencies voting against (Lynch, 1992, p.447).

Divisions within all political parties, and within Scottish society more generally, over devolution are evidenced in the outcome of the 1979 referendum. While it is indubitably true devolution was mixed together with the 'Winter of Discontent' and an unpopular government coming to the end of its term, aspects of the campaign also demonstrated a lack of consensus on the issue. The campaign saw a combination of personal, political and organisational divisions within a badly funded 'Yes' campaign, facing a better funded and more united 'No' campaign with a clearer message. The 40% barrier was not overcome and the result proved to be "inconclusive, ambivalent and confusing" (Devine, 1999. p588), with 51.6% of those voting, but only 32.9% of the electorate, voting 'Yes'. As

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Finlay notes, “[w]hile a syndrome of ‘we were robbed’ has grown up about the devolution referendum, the truth of the matter is that it, more than anything showed how ambivalent the Scots were to the issue” (1997, p.157). The Daily Record, then as now the largest circulation newspaper in Scotland, reflected this with its headline the day after the referendum: “A Nation Divided” (Lynch, 1992, p.447). The subsequent passage of a vote of no confidence (by one vote), supported by the SNP, led to a General Election that returned a Conservative government. The SNP’s precipitation of an election was ultimately self-defeating: as PM James Callaghan predicted during the debate on the motion of confidence, it was “the first time in recorded history that turkeys have been known to vote for an early Christmas” (Jay, 1996, p.73), with a Conservative government and SNP losses the predictable outcome.<sup>57</sup> SNP representation was reduced from eleven to two seats. Margaret Thatcher’s new Conservative government quickly carried out the requirement of the Scotland Act that if devolution was not endorsed by referendum, the government should repeal the Act. Devolution was dead for the moment and 1979 “marked a return to British politics in Scotland” (Wood, 1989, p.129).

### **§3. The Developing Scottish Discourse Community 1967–1979.**

It is within the context of this developing debate that the creation of the discourse community is traced. This is an elite community and it is perhaps helpful to highlight members and groups within this elite, and the documents through which their interactions

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<sup>57</sup> James Callaghan (1912-2005), Labour MP for Cardiff South and later Cardiff South-East from 1945. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer (1964–1967), Home Secretary (1967–1970), Foreign Secretary (1974–1976) and Prime Minister (1976–1979). He was later created Lord Callaghan of Cardiff.

are reconstructed. In many cases these have already been mentioned. This section will indicate how they are implicated within the development of the constitutional debate and the discourse community's creation. Some documents are utilised as they are recognised contemporaneously and later as important or connected to central events/figures, others as they are referenced in such documents. This is, of course, where sources are available.<sup>58</sup> Other documents are included because they provide a detailed account of conventional arguments and positions, representing the main rhetorical divisions of the debate. Cross-referencing and use of recognised central documents seeks to address concerns about representativeness. Other documents encountered during documentary analysis are employed as corroborative sources to further address such concerns.

Importantly for discourse community development, dominant within the debate in this period are the partisan dynamics and rhetorical divisions endemic in competition between the main political parties: the Conservative, Labour, Liberal and Scottish National parties and Jim Sillars's Scottish Labour Party (SLP). This is in contrast to the post-1979 debate emphasis, not least amongst political parties, upon 'civil society' involvement and the work of civic organisations such as the 'Campaign for a Scottish Parliament'.<sup>59</sup> Paterson, in his collection of documents from the debate, provides an indication of the partisan

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<sup>58</sup> For example, the 1968 anti-nationalist *Don't Butcher Scotland's Future* by Jim Sillars and Alex Eadie, while an important document and referenced within the debate, was unable to be located. Given the subsequent change of Sillars's views, it is tempting to believe that he withdrew the document but, whatever the reason, there is not even a copy in the National Library of Scotland. Where important documents are unavailable, secondary sources are used to reconstruct their argument. For example, Drucker (1978) and Kemp (1993) both contain verbatim extracts and paraphrases from this document.

<sup>59</sup> Of course, this later 'civic' emphasis also had rhetorical and partisan effects, if not motives, co-opting 'civic Scotland' for one side of a partisan debate, whether or not this represented more than a rhetorical strategy.

nature of the debate within the 1967-1979 period: eighteen of twenty documents included from this period are from parties or individuals/groups with clear partisan associations (Paterson, 1998a). Partisan interactions, therefore, are key in developing rhetorical conventions. Partisan divisions structure rhetorical interaction between interlocutors who recognise one another through their development and employment of such conventions. By structuring the ways contributors interrelate, and therefore what is possible through interaction, these rhetorical divisions structure the discourse community that is possible, locating a set of central issues over which debate occurs and through which the discourse community develops. These foci provide the topics of Chapters Four, Five and Six: an evaluative debate over nationalism, the explicit debate over constitutional structures, and the role of the economy. Chapter Seven outlines how the discourse community develops, building on the conventions, tropes and rhetorical divisions previously outlined. Given the centrality of partisan dynamics, key figures, groups and documents will be outlined here according to partisan affiliation.

### **Labour.**

The key rhetorical division within the partisan debate is between the SNP and Labour. The SNP, whose success in 1967 propelled the partisan debate, clearly present a challenge that requires a response from other parties; that the key response is from Labour is understandable for a number of reasons. Labour was in government for all but four of the twelve years under examination, including the two periods where reaction to SNP success was imperative: after Hamilton and after the 1974 General Elections. Further, Labour was



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the dominant party in Scotland throughout this period, with the largest vote-share and number of seats. That this was the central partisan rhetorical division, and therefore central to understanding the development of the discourse community, would be reinforced through the dynamics of the period. Thus, Labour documents throughout the period concentrate on critiquing the SNP in regard to the economic case for independence, emotionalism and the SNP's form of nationalism, described as 'separatism' and characterised as divisive and regressive. Such partisan tropes are also evident in the Labour government's devolution White Paper (HMG, 1975). While Labour's devolution position changes during the debate, these central critiques continue and the Labour/SNP partisan division is reinforced. These critiques reinforce aspects of Scotland's banal nationalism; link this to the partisan dynamics of the constitutional debate; develop some underlying evaluative agreement on central democratic concepts although obscured by partisan dynamics; and transform the debate gradually from one centred on political divisions to one perceived as focusing on economic factors.

Some figures and documents are highlighted because of their recognised influence, others because of their eloquence in forwarding conventional arguments. JP Mackintosh is highlighted for both reasons. His *A Parliament for Scotland* (1976) presents one of the most eloquent outlines of the maximalist argument for devolution, inflected with the conventions of partisan debate; his *The Devolution of Power* (1968) is a more academic work referenced by a number of other key documents, including Kilbrandon (1973a) and Home (1970) as authoritative. While merely a backbench Labour MP, Mackintosh was widely respected and influential through his academic work, political pamphleteering,

personal influence on key figures and journalism. Through his contributions, both the political divisions, which inflect the earlier part of the debate, and the economic focus, which become central as the debate progresses, can be traced. Mackintosh demonstrates both a principled position within the debate as a convinced devolutionist of long standing, as well as strategic rhetorical tropes. Dalyell, the most vociferous of the anti-Devolution Scottish Labour MPs, represents the most developed arguments *against* constitutional reform. Dalyell's *Devolution: the End of Britain?* (1977), which articulates the main arguments against constitutional reform, is both useful and was contemporaneously perceived as important. Indeed, Brown and Harvie state that Dalyell presents the only coherent statement of the anti-devolution case (1979, p.4). That Dalyell was widely seen as one of the most convincing anti-devolutionists can also be deduced from his touring debates during the 1979 referendum with one of the most articulate pro-devolutionary figures, Sillars. As well as Dalyell (1977), Dalyell (1976) is utilised. This includes many of the arguments found in the later book, although directly responding to Labour (1976a).

Dalyell, who parts company with his party after its conversion to devolution; and Mackintosh, who influences a number of those who constitute the discourse community, are not themselves part of the discourse community. However, they are influential within the constitutional debate as a whole, and represent key arguments that structure the context within which the discourse community develops. Gordon Brown, one of the figures along with Sillars who was influenced by Mackintosh, edits the much referenced *Red Paper on Scotland* (1975) and is perhaps the most important Labour figure in the development of the

discourse community.<sup>60</sup> Throughout Brown (1975), Brown and fellow contributors, such as Ray Burnett and John McGrath, ideologically engage with nationalism and, within the context of partisan debate and though inflected by strategic considerations, illustrate and further debate upon the compatibility of socialism and nationalism. This is, indeed, illustrated by Brown (1975), which includes two SNP contributors, Bob Tait, and Owen Dudley Edwards, who explicitly argue for dialogue between socialism and nationalism. Brown (1975) also includes an influential contribution by Tom Nairn, which illustrates tropes of the evolving discourse community and gives them more nuanced articulation, providing an intellectual framework for a synthesis of socialism and nationalism.

### **The Scottish National Party.**

The SNP's role in this partisan division and the effects of conventional critiques are examined through SNP documents. MacIntosh (1966), published just before our period, is useful in showing SNP concerns at the very early stages of the debate, as are Ewing (1968), including a foreword by then SNP convener Robert MacIntyre, and Ludovic Kennedy (1968), a Liberal supporter of Ewing at Hamilton. Responses to partisan critiques are found in documents such as *The New Scotland* (SNP, 1974 approximately) and SNP press releases from figures such as George Reid, William Wolfe, Douglas Crawford and Professor Neil MacCormick. These suggest that the critiques made of the SNP have an

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<sup>60</sup> *The Red Paper on Scotland* constitutes a single contribution to the debate, as does Kennedy (ed.), (1976) *The Radical Alternative: Papers for an Independent Scotland* and MacCormick (ed.), (1970) *The Scottish Debate: Essays on Scottish Nationalism*. Thus, although edited collections, these sources will be referenced as single primary sources: Brown (1975), Kennedy (1976) and MacCormick (1970). Where individual chapters are analysed, the contributors are referenced in the text.

effect in how the SNP presents its case. Indeed, Kellas notes that the SNP “shun” the word ‘separatist’ (1976, p.64). As observed from MacIntosh (1966), Ewing (1968) and Kennedy (1968), the economy is an issue, but not central in SNP argument at the start of this period. The focus of partisan attacks on the SNP on the grounds of the economy foregrounds the issue, so that by Kennedy (1976) the economy has become central to SNP arguments.

Kennedy (1976) is the SNP-sympathetic equivalent of Brown (1975). Where Brown (1975) illustrates socialists engaging with ‘nationalism’, Kennedy (1976) demonstrates nationalists engaging with socialism. Key contributors include Margo MacDonald, Owen Dudley Edwards, Stephen Maxwell and Isobel Lindsay. Indeed the name of the book indicates another key term of *radicalism*, which takes a central place in the development of a discourse community. George Reid is another key SNP figure in the development of this discourse community. Indeed, in the magazine *Q: Question: The Independent Political Review for Scotland: Arts, Business, Science*, he explicitly considers whether a new left-nationalist Scottish politics is emerging within the constitutional debate (*Q*, February 1975).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Q: Question...* is henceforth referenced as *Q*. Until October 1976, *Q* was published monthly; thereafter it was published fortnightly. Referencing reflects this, with editions published after October 1976 specifying date of publication as well as month.

## The Development of a Discourse Community

### The Conservatives.

That the partisan tropes established through Labour/SNP interaction achieve a conventional place within the rhetoric of the Scottish political elite can be seen from their use within not only Labour documents, but also within those from other parties and non-party documents. Thus, Lang and Henderson assert that “the strength of the SNP in Scotland has been based on an emotional feeling” (1975, p.18), while Home asserts that ‘a separate Scotland’ would entail an economic cost “unacceptable to the Scottish people” (1970, p.25). The Conservatives’ contribution to the discourse community is minimal, although they do contribute to the constitutional debate as a whole. This is because one of the tropes of the discourse community, and one of the effects of its creation and the diffusion of its tropes, is marginalisation of the Conservatives, a marginalisation apparently accepted even by Conservatives, for example Rifkind’s contribution to *Q* (November, 1975).

### The Liberals.

The Liberals also react to the partisan tropes established over the central rhetorical division: for example they reject the “extreme arguments” of the SNP for a “separate, independent Scotland” which would deny Scotland a voice in economic decisions that would still affect her (Liberals, 1976, p.14). Key figures are Russell Johnson and David Steel. Johnston writes the foreword to a document outlining the Liberal policy of federalism (1976), which illustrates Liberal engagement within the partisan debate; both Mackintosh (1968) and Hanham (1969) reference (presumably a pre-publication copy of)

Steel's *Out of Control* (1970), as a particularly good outline of the faults of the constitutional status quo. As well as providing an concise outline of these critiques, Steel addresses the explicit constitutional arguments concerning the appropriate government system for Scotland. The Liberals, while not at the centre of the development of the discourse community, can be seen to illustrate some aspects central to its development, for example the invocation of Scottish 'radicalism' (Liberals, 1976, p.19). Steel, indeed, engages with George Reid's assessment of an evolving left wing consensus in a way that does not deny Reid's thesis (*Q*, March, 1976).

### The SLP.

Jim Sillars's contribution to the debate is most notable after his defection and establishment of the SLP, although his co-authored *Don't Butcher Scotland's Future* in 1968 was also important. Sillars contributes to Brown (1975) before his defection, and the SLP can be seen as a logical step in the ideological engagement illustrated by that collection and Kennedy (1976). The SLP's party magazine, *Forward Scotland* (1976–1977), and Sillars's contributions to *Crann-Tara* and *Q*, as well as other contributors, such as then SLP National Organising Committee member Lindsay Paterson, are used to illustrate the role of the SLP in the evolving discourse. The SLP's *Forward Scotland* also includes contributions from other key figures within the SLP, including John Robertson, the other Labour MP who 'defected'. The SLP may seem the logical outcome of the development of the discourse community; this is obscured and ultimately denied by the partisan dynamics, which continue to inflect the discourse. Nevertheless, its

contribution, paradoxically, reinforces the construction of this dialogue. Two figures already mentioned, Tait and Nairn, who contribute to Brown (1975) both join the SLP.

### Non-Party Contributions.

The discourse community is largely developed through partisan sources and across the rhetorical divisions of partisan debate. However, some non-party and academic sources should also be mentioned. The partisan tropes developed through the debate are diffused, and found in non-party documents. Thus, *The Scotsman* (1968), in a series of editorials supporting federalism (republished collectively as a pamphlet) makes an implicit distinction between nationalisms: that which is unthreatening, “faith in Scotland and a practical patriotism” (1968, p.5), and that which “goes further than would be necessary to safeguard Scotland’s ability to solve her own problems” (1968, p.7). Kilbrandon (1973a, 1973b), clearly important within the debate and indicating contemporary views through its synthesis of evidence gathered in Scotland (and throughout the UK) over four years, similarly shows the extent of the penetration of partisan tropes. Although recognising positive aspects of SNP success, the Kilbrandon Commission (1973a) notes that, “perhaps the greatest significance of the Scottish nationalism movement lies not in *its advocacy of separatism*, but in the means it has provided for the people of Scotland to register their feeling of national identity and political impotence”, even though many Scots do not endorse separatism (1973, p.107; my italics). Similarly *Scotland*, the magazine of The Scottish Council (Development and Industry), and *New Edinburgh Review (NER)* illustrate an increasing interest in Scottish politics and the extent to which the evaluative debate on

nationalism that the debate impels is diffused.<sup>62</sup> While the debate is so strongly inflected by partisan dynamics in this period that it can be questioned to what extent any contribution is *entirely* external to these dynamics, these are sources that either aimed at independence from partisan association or are not clearly identifiably partisan. *Calgacus*, *Crann-Tara* and *Q* are 'independent' sources, in the sense of not being clearly associated with any party.<sup>63</sup> These magazines were influential in the development of the discourse community. All were founded in the mid-1970s when there was clearly a perceived need for such forums of debate, and all seek to enable dialogue between socialists, nationalists and 'radicals'. Indeed, there was a significant crossover of contributors from these magazines, Brown (1975), the SLP (1976-1977) and Kennedy (1976), the last written by contributors to *Q*. This crossover is indicative of the parameters of discourse community membership, and it is partly through this commonality of contributions to similar publications that shared references and dialogue develops.

### Academic Sources.

A number of academic sources from the period are utilised. Some are used because they are referenced within the debate and are clearly influential on its development. Thus, Mackintosh (1968) is referenced in Kilbrandon (1973a; 1973b) and Home (1970), and Mackintosh's personal influence has already been mentioned. Gavin McCrone (1969) is an

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<sup>62</sup> The Scottish Council (Development and Industry) will henceforth be referenced as *Scottish Council*.

<sup>63</sup> The run of each magazine constitutes the relevant 'text': magazine structure does not change frequently and changes can be highlighted where necessary. As the magazine run is the relevant text, articles in these magazines are referenced by magazine edition and the author is referenced in the text: for example, Maxwell (*Q*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1977).



## The Development of a Discourse Community

influential academic contribution to the debate over the economy, due both to its extensive and nuanced development of the economic arguments within the debate, and the its influence including on opponents. Thus, Kennedy (1976) explicitly seeks to counter McCrone's arguments. Hechter (1999, first published in 1975), and Nairn (in Brown, 1975; 1977) are influential within the subset of the constitutional debate within which the discourse community develops. Other academic sources such as Hanham (1969), MacCormick (1970), Brand (1978) and Esman (1975) provide insight into contemporaneous perceptions and enable a more reflexive consideration of the documents.

### **§5. Conclusion.**

This chapter has developed the bare outline of the discourse community provided in Chapter One. The conceptual space available for the development of the discourse community has been discussed in terms of its ideological inheritance and the immediate context of the constitutional debate, and an indicative outline of figures, groups and documents provided. The creation of the discourse community has implications not only for the resulting ideological contexts, but also for our understanding of the debate through which it was created. Chapter Three discusses current historiography of the period, indicating the advantages of Skinnerian methodology in understanding and accommodating these effects, providing a historiography more sensitive to the ideological developments of the period and the implications of the development of the discourse community.

**The Scottish Discourse Community and Historiography.**

**§1. Introduction.**

The discourse community was formed within the developing constitutional debate building on the existing ideological inheritance. The development of the discourse community affects subsequent understandings of the debate, which often reflect the debate's ideological outcomes including the creation of that discourse community. As Chapter One noted, current societal ideologies affect historical perspectives. A Skinnerian examination encourages understanding the past as a dynamic historical process and minimises the danger of committing the “common source of error”, identified by the Scottish Enlightenment's William Robertson, of understanding “the institutions and manners of past ages, by the forms and ideas which prevail in our own times” (Kidd, 1993, p.119). In so doing, it challenges elements of the prevailing understanding of the debate, while illustrating why these gained prominence, and has implications for political science focused on Scotland: Scottish politics is heavily informed by the ideological outcome of the constitutional debate as well as particular understandings of Scottish political history. This chapter discusses the role of history in identity creation/maintenance and Scottish historiographical traditions. In particular, three historiographical accounts of the constitutional debate, which are challenged in this thesis, are outlined. The conclusion suggests a further value of such an approach in relation to accounts of Scotland's place within the UK.

## The Development of a Discourse Community

The short period under investigation, and its contemporary nature in historical terms, requires an expansive use of recent writing on Scottish history and politics. Hutchison notes that, despite exceptions such as Fry (1987), there is a relative lack of inclusive political histories on twentieth century Scotland, never mind our more restricted period, with most concentrating on specific organisations or events such as “left wing Clydeside politics during and immediately after the First World War...[and] the Scottish Self-Government question” (2001, p.xi). Further, many recent histories cover a much broader period and, understandably, devote limited space to the 1967-1979 period: Lynch (1992) covers this period in four pages, Devine (1999) in one chapter. Such histories are supplemented by social science studies. Such studies are excellent resources although, as Hutchison observes, many often contain only cursory historical surveys (2001, p.xi). Such studies also often have specific foci, limiting their usefulness: Mitchell (1996a), for example, studies ‘strategies’ used by the ‘self-government movement’, although Mitchell (1996a), is unusual amongst social scientific accounts in extensively using primary documentary sources, making this a valuable resource. Social science studies are often informative of assumptions about Scottish political history, even where historical considerations are minimal or secondary. Sources have also been utilised which cover the period journalistically rather than academically, such as Kemp (1993) and Marr (1995). These sources constitute the period’s broad historiography.

## §2. Narrative Identity and Historiography.

A shared understanding of history is central to the creation of national identity. As McCrone outlines, “nationalism is above all about ‘history’ in the sense that it writes its own, that it constructs an account of its origins and its past which legitimises the present and offers signposts for the future” (1998, p.viii). How one sees one’s history affects one’s self-understanding and how one is perceived. All accounts of history are also accounts of identity, in this sense. Understandings of the constitutional debate, therefore, affect Scotland’s political self-understanding. To the extent that the creation of the discourse community formed the societal ideology within which Scottish identity is implicated, it affects Scotland’s understanding of its past. Understanding the discourse community requires analysing its content, creation and maintenance as a process of continuous construction affecting the resulting ideological context, the societal ideology within which ‘Scottishness’ is implicated, formed through the constitutional debate.

McCrone helpfully links the process of identity formation to Bhabha’s conception of the nation as a ‘narrative’, “whose origin is obscure, but whose symbolic power to mobilise the sense of identity and allegiance is strong” (1998, p.30) and, as Hearn notes, “there is a powerful inclination, especially amongst avowed nationalists, to impose a Telos on national history...Scotland is no exception” (2000, p.37). What is highlighted and underplayed, why and how, are the important aspects in understanding a national identity: “[a]ny narrative history has to involve choices, not only about inclusions and exclusions, but also about the kind of story it will tell” (Whitmarsh, 2004, p.11). Stuart Hall’s

identification of 'discursive strategies', summarised by McCrone, illustrates how a nation's narrative is constructed:

“[t]he narrative of the nation is told and retold through national histories, literatures, the media and popular culture, which together provide a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals. Through these stories national identity is presented as primordial, essential, unified and continuous. People of the late twentieth century are linked in a linear fashion with those of a distant past, even those - like fourteenth century peasants in the case of the Hollywood movie *Braveheart* - with whom they manifestly would have little in common” (McCrone, 1998, p.52).

Clearly, what is created may be a 'myth'; but it constitutes an identity 'true' for those who share it.<sup>64</sup> As McCrone notes, identity is:

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<sup>64</sup> 'Myth' has been widely acknowledged, from Renan onwards, as important in national identity creation (see Smith and Hutchison, 1994; McCrone, 1998). All narratives emphasise selectively, and national myth is one outcome of this process, evident in all national identities. As evidenced in the *Braveheart* example above, and long known in relation to 'invented traditions' such as the kilt (see Trevor-Roper, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1983), links can be established through narrative history which, although untrue, reflect something seen as important to those with that identity. Although rarely completely fictitious, the myth is often partially related to truth (McCrone, 1999, p.240). The central Scottish myth, for example, is that of 'Scottish democracy', derived from Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland, and believed as embodied particularly within the Scottish educational system. Hearn asserts that the Scottish myth presents Scotland as embodying the values of democracy, egalitarianism and "even basic conviviality" (2000, p.37). This is, "the Scottish myth, the belief that Scotland is a more egalitarian society than England, and that social mobility is somewhat easier" (McCrone, 1996, p.113). The understanding of the past given by national myth "helps to affirm a sense of identity by saying who Scots are and what they value" (McCrone, 1999, p.237). As myths serve purposes of identity, they are often "not amenable to truth" as they "operate on a different plane from 'facts'...they are a collection of symbolic elements organise to explain and validate sets of social institutions...reservoirs of beliefs and values that allow individuals to interpret the world and their place within it" (McCrone, 1999, p.235). Thus, Esler (*The Scotsman*, 1/11/1999) is able to acknowledge the kilt as an 'invented tradition' in *The Scotsman* without threatening the Scottish identity of which this forms a part. As Schopflin notes, "myth is not identical with falsehood or deception. Members of a community may be

“not a ‘thing’ that can be treated as real or unreal, but a social space in which matters of social structure and culture come together. What it means to be Scottish is far less important for the answers than for the terms in which the debate occurs. Identity politics...becomes a sphere in which history, society and politics interact...a debate about different versions of being Scottish which seek to mobilise process and iconography” (2001, p.3).

This is not to argue that such ideologically constructed historical narratives are the same, or should be accorded the same status, as academic history. Historians are aware of the dangers of mythmaking and methodologically careful not to impose their views on the past.<sup>65</sup> Historians, ideally, are historiographers, aware of their assumptions, reflexive in their treatment of the past, conscious of their biases and motivated by a desire to understand. History as a developed academic discipline has all the rigour that this implies.<sup>66</sup>

Youngson maintains a distinction between history and ‘propaganda’, analogous to that between academic history and the effects of discursive change on historical identity narratives. Youngson argues that unlike propagandists, “[t]he genuine historian makes

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aware that the myth they accept is not true, but because myth is not history, this does not matter. It is the content of myth that is important, not its accuracy as a historical account” (1997, pp.19-20). Canovan argues that to a nation, “an element of myth is essential” (1996, p.69). Nevertheless, they are, as are all historical interpretations, fluid and contestable. For example, McCrone notes that the Scottish myth can have a meritocratic/conservative or egalitarian/activist emphasis (see McCrone, 1992, pp.95-103; 2001, pp.93-99).

<sup>65</sup> Not always successfully: AD Smith, for example, notes the tendency amongst early scholars of nationalism to ‘read back’ nations into history, influenced subconsciously by nationalism (1996, p.360).

<sup>66</sup> At least today: Bentley notes that French historian Jules Michelet’s PhD, written at the beginning of the professionalisation of history as a University discipline, consisted of “26 pages of generously spaced text” (1999, p.73). Today’s thesis examiners may pine for such brevity.

every effort to avoid bias...[h]istory depends on honest invention” (1985, p.17). Nevertheless, although “[c]rude propaganda is easily separated from history...there is unfortunately no clear dividing line between them...both are and have to be selective in their presentation of the ‘facts’. It is a matter of degree and honesty” (Youngson, 1985, p.18). Similarly, academic historians seek understanding, while those involved within ideological discourses, although they may employ historical perspectives and identity narratives, normally seek specific ends, often short-term and strategic, and often affecting their ideological context in unintended ways. However, as with Youngson’s distinction of history and propaganda, there is no clear dividing line as “[a]ll understandings of the past affect the present. Literate or illiterate, we are our memories. We try to shape our future in the light of past experience” (Tonkin, 1994, p.25).

Historians have to make judgements about their focus, inclusion and exclusion. Such judgements are influenced by current ideological context. Historians necessarily determine what is important in the past from the present. Thus, Finlay, writing prior to devolution, notes that “a nationalist victory [in the constitutional debate] will enhance the historical significance of all past nationalist organisations, just as a devolutionist or status quo victory will enhance the historical reputations of previous proponents of these schemes” (1997, p.4). Morton illustrates how different ideological contexts can lead to different interpretations. Given the revival of Scottish Nationalism and the popular (if not entirely accurate) retelling of his story in the film *Braveheart*, most Scots today view Sir William Wallace as a *Nationalist* as well as national hero. However, in the nineteenth century, where historical writing was predominantly of the ‘Whig’ variety, emphasising

Enlightenment and progress, and regarding the 1707 Union as a stage on this progressive road, Wallace's achievement was perceived to have been that of preserving Scottish independence so that a later voluntary Union could be forged (Morton, 1999, p.181-2; 2001).<sup>67</sup> Historiographical interpretations do not begin from a *tabula rasa* but operate within ideological contexts, previously constructed identities and associated historical narratives. Historiography interacts with the discourse within which societal ideology and national identity are constructed. As the discourse community is conceived as part of the formation of societal ideology, this also informs understandings of history and histories in turn, insofar as they inform the discourse community and the process of ideology formation, have reciprocal influence.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the discourse community's self-understanding is an account and, to the extent that this is diffused and accepted, *the* account, of what is important in the nation's past. This is a characteristic of 'informal institutions', which not only establish meaning for members, but also "the rules and behavioural routines that make up the institution are...recognised, validated and expected by third parties" (Offe, 2001, p.363). To the extent that ideological developments have conditioned the present, they influence what is seen as important to understand in the past. Some understandings reflected in modern Scottish historiography are, at least partly, products of the debate that formed Scotland's current societal ideology, and the development of the Scottish discourse community.

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<sup>67</sup> Such uses, of course, are distinct from clear misuses, for example, the 'mythstake' Morton quotes from 'Canada 3000' in-flight magazine: "The Wallace Monument at Sterling (sic) marks the spot where Wallace Simpson camped in 1297 before defeating the English in an encounter made famous by Mel Gibson in the Oscar winning film Braveheart" (2001, p.88).

<sup>68</sup> It may be argued that in a small society such as Scotland this interplay is heightened: Pittock, for example, notes "the particular symbiosis in Scottish society between scholars, opinion-formers and politicians" (2001, p.ix).



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Given the relationship between history, societal ideology and identity, historians must examine ideological transformations in their own terms rather than in terms of their results. Insofar as historical interpretations are contested, “this controversy is most often itself a function of Scottish nationality and the debate over what it means” (Pittock, 2001, p.1). Fry indicates that Scottish historiography *is* contested, contrasting his political history (Fry, 1987) to:

“Whig or Anglo-British historiography which claimed that Scotland had no political history worth the name...Marxist or vulgar Marxist historiography, which claimed that such historiography would anyway be worthless unless it vindicated the experience of the working class, or...nationalist historiography which claimed that such historiography could only be of value if it supported the case for Scottish independence” (2001, p.vii).

To Fry, left wing or nationalist ‘Whiggism’ is present in much newer history:

“still distorting the past by interpreting it in terms of the present...Whig history proper started by seeing a gradual, natural, inevitable progression towards political and religious rights and freedoms. It is a difference only of form rather than of substance to see a similar progression towards democracy, equality, collectivism and socialism, or a nationhood embracing these things” (1992, p.87).

Indeed, Fry admits that he, as a ‘Tory historian’, is:

“to some extent infected by Whiggery, and in a way happy to be so: far too rigorous an effort to disassociate the past from the present also has its dangers, encourages antiquarian or monographic history at the expense of the dramatic narrative...yet it ought to be possible, without hoary handed moralizing to derive from a society its view of its history from its uses of and attitudes to its past” (1992, p.87).

As Skinner notes, one's choice of subject is necessarily determined by present concerns. However, the dangers of teleological history should not be overlooked. Ideological 'distortions' of the past in terms of the present can be perceived in terms of the false 'mythologies' Skinner ascribes to textualist and contextualist history. For example, a 'mythology of doctrines', 'looking for' specific things in the past, perceiving 'anticipations' of future events, and ignoring or downplaying the importance of agency in historical change can be perceived as particularly evident in recent attempts to historically contextualise the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, where history becomes a teleological account of an inevitable idea. Such a false mythology leads to a history that looks for 'devolutionary' movements in the past, seeing past 'home rule' movements as 'anticipations' of events to which the historian, unlike his subject, has access.<sup>69</sup> As Finlay

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<sup>69</sup> Accounts of a notional history of 'home rule' or 'the national movement' including campaigns for the Scottish Office, the Liberal party split over Home Rule and the Scottish Home Rule Association (SHRA) in the 1880s; the re-founded interwar SHRA; the home rule commitment of Keir Hardie, the ILP and early Labour; the SNP and its predecessor parties; the 1950's 'Scottish Covenant' movement; the constitutional debate post-Hamilton and, more lately, the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly/Parliament and Scottish Constitutional Convention are often given to contextualise the debate or the devolution settlement, for example by Devine (1996, pp.5-6), and Pittock (2001). MacFadden and Lazarowicz outline such a lineage as "The Road to Devolution" (2002, p.1); Lynch in terms of "The Return of Scotland" (2001, p.3) and "The Long Road to The Scottish Parliament" (2001, p.6), clearly implying a narrative teleology. Hassan asserts that "the campaign for a Scottish Parliament lasted approximately one hundred years" (1999b, p.15), although recognising the contemporary debate begins with our period; and McLean argues that there has been a "Scottish national/home rule movement of some sort since 1707" although the 1880s saw the start of

notes in relation to claims of Scotland's 'missing' nationalism, such accounts are "based on hindsight. If we talk about the failure of Scottish nationalism to deliver independence in the nineteenth century then we are guilty of making subjective judgments as to what kind of nationalism is best" (1997, p.10). Such accounts also risk highlighting movements/events as significant when they may not have been, committing the false 'mythology of prolepsis': examining retrospective rather than historical significance. For example, this is evident in PH Scott's statement that the words of Calgacus, credited by Tacitus with leading resistance to Rome as the "first inhabitant of the place we now know as Scotland...curiously anticipate both Bruce's speech before Bannockburn as reported by Barbour and echoed by Burns, and the Declaration of Arbroath" (1997, p.xii), despite the speech being composed by Tacitus and never delivered; and his assertion of the 1638 National League and Covenant that, "[t]he unstated implication was the doctrine of the declaration of Arbroath..." (1997, p.25), although the Declaration was rediscovered just prior to the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1689 (Kidd, 1993, p.29) making such a historical lineage impossible.

Hutchison argues, in contrast to teleological narratives of the debate, that primary sources show how rarely the constitutional issue was on the political agenda for most of the twentieth century and, "furthermore, when the topic was raised, its contemporary impact

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the "modern Scottish home rule movement" (McLean, 1999, p.21). It is occasionally recognised that these campaigns and organisations had different aims, for example in Mitchell (1996a) or Finlay's caution that, although the constitution has been debated and adapted to changing circumstances since the nineteenth century, 'Scottish nationalism' has not always constituted a challenge to the UK state (1997, p.3). However, the repeated lineage does imply a clear narrative genealogy. Hutchison obliquely opposes himself to such teleological accounts in his determination not to produce "a sort of Whig interpretation of twentieth Century Scottish politics, such as that currently held by some, namely that the...Scottish parliament was the culmination of a long, central and inevitable process" (2001, p.xxii).

was often rather less significant than posterity suggest, so that failure to deliver a measure of devolution rarely provoked electoral hubris” (2001, p.xii). Thus, an “assumption which may be overstated is that Scottish politics have long been distinct from the rest of Britain. On the whole, it seems more accurate to see such trends as fluctuating” (Hutchison, 2001, p.xii). Such fluctuation also occurs in other areas of the UK and, even since the 1970s, there has not been continuous divergence: after 1979 the SNP appeared less significant than the Liberal/SDP Alliance, “[s]o the suddenness and intensity of the upsurge of backing for the SNP in this decade may be viewed as a new and epochal trend, as much as the evolving trajectory of past trends” (Hutchison, 2001, p.xii). Similarly, Keating (1989a) notes that while, up until the 1970s, ‘missing nationalism’ was explained as the result of successful British nation-building, this view has been discredited and replaced by a contrasting emphasis on differentiation and disintegration: he suggests a more realistic approach is to recognise the presence of integrative and disintegrative elements. By obfuscating such differences over time teleological narratives commit a ‘mythology of coherence’, imposing coherence on the past to fit a conception of the present. For example, Finlay argues that Nairn:

“does not do adequate justice to the historical complexities of the evolution of Scottish national identity. The historian should not impose his or her own wish fulfilment on the past, but rather must endeavour to explain what happened, however unpalatable that may be” (1997, p.20).

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Such teleological histories may also lead to the presumption of concepts such as ‘home rule’ or ‘self-government’ with stable and consistent meaning, although their meaning has varied over time (see Mitchell, 1996a; Finlay, 1997), committing a ‘mythology of parochialism’. Thus, while 1880s ‘home rulers’ described themselves as ‘nationalists’, they:

“did not want to break the Union. Indeed, their argument in favour of a Scottish parliament revolved around the notion that it would strengthen the Union and the British Empire...It is all too easy to equate Scottish nationalism as being intrinsically hostile to the British state. This has been a problem with the work of a number of historians who have...been writing about a particular type of nationalism” (Finlay, 1997, p.9).

All of these mythological errors involve reading back present concerns into the past. However, while the historian necessarily chooses those subjects of interest to them, that “no method of historical investigation is perfect is no argument against striving to get as near as possible to a sense of what happened in the past and for doing so in an open and intellectually rigorous frame of reference” (Cowan & Finlay, 2002, p.6).

### §3. Scottish Historiography.

The historiographical perspectives discussed in this chapter reflect understandings that partly emanate from the creation of the discourse community. While he asserts that Scottish historiography is “a field contested among schools of thought diverse even by the standards of the Scottish antisyzygy – the principle that whatever may be asserted by the Scots, the opposite may be asserted with equal force and truth” (Fry, 2001, pp.491-2), Fry notes a Scottish historiographical bias towards social and economic history, which he argues assumes a norm of ‘assimilation’ because Scotland’s social and economic history is a variation of British social and economic history, given the integration of the British economy. Thus, “[i]t may reasonably be concluded that what makes Scotland Scotland is not to be found in her social and economic history” (Fry, 2001, p.492). Fry identifies Devine as exemplifying this economic and social historiographical tradition, in relation to their respective accounts of Scotland’s relationship to the British Empire. He argues that, contra Devine, “the Empire represented not merely a demographic trend but a huge idea about the world and Scotland’s place in it. Devine’s Scots move but they do not feel; they are pawns in an economic process, not human beings” (Fry, 19/10/2003). Fry states that Devine’s “wearisome” concentration on statistics (*Sunday Times*, 19/10/2003) misses the larger picture as his:

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“prime interest lies not in people or ideas but in numbers...Devine’s obsession obscures any bigger picture...[Devine’s book] covers the period when, by any standards, the nation’s culture was more interesting than its mildly curious demography. But it reverses that order of importance...Devine pretends that the history of Empire and the history of emigration are the same, but they are not...Devine should stop counting and start thinking” (Fry, 19/10/2003).

Devine retorts that Fry (2001) is “disappointing and unsatisfying”, arguing that the ‘statistical dimension’ is “the backbone to what is an attempt to trace within the body, muscle and blood of the Scottish experience a much wider perspective” (*Sunday Times*, 19/10/2003). This distinction is undoubtedly exaggerated due to the personalities involved.<sup>70</sup> However, there is a strong, indeed dominant, tradition of socio-economic historiography, exemplified by Devine and the Historiographer Royal for Scotland, TC Smout. This tradition also informs the historical basis of a number of social scientific studies such as Brown et al (1998) and McCrone (2001).

Donnachie and Whatley observe that, “the case of the Union shows...[that] economic (and social) history is playing an increasingly important part in the process of the manufacture of Scottish history” (1992, p.4). This, they note, is in contrast to a previous historical tradition, predominantly ‘political’ and focusing on central personalities and events,

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<sup>70</sup> The two historians engaged in a public spat over their respective accounts of Scotland’s imperial experience (Fry, 2001; Devine, 2003). This spat was worsened by personal factors, as Fry asserts that he was to act as advisor to a BBC TV series based on his book, but that the BBC instead constructed the series around Devine’s book, with Devine as advisor. See *Sunday Times* (19/10/2003), Fry (19/10/2003).

although they also caution against drawing this distinction too sharply (1992, p.8). Indeed, the assertion of a dominant social and economic history tradition does not suggest social and economic historians ignore politics or that historians should not pay attention to socio-economic history. However, the dominance of this tradition does emphasise social and economic explanations, potentially at the expense of other factors such as ideas and agency. Paterson (1994), for example, one of the authors of Brown et al (1998) does not ignore the ideological dimension of politics. Thus, he argues that the early post-Union managerial system of Scottish governance reflected elite politics, Presbyterianism and Enlightenment rationalism, while twentieth century corporatism reflected a technocratic consensus. In outlining forms of Scottish post-1707 autonomy, he states that these:

“have changed as the state and society and the economy have changed and what one generation might regard as autonomy might be felt by their successors to be dependency; we must be wary of that Whig aberration of judging the past by the standards of the present” (Paterson, 1994, p.4).

However, it is unclear in Paterson (1994) what role ideas play in the *process* of political *change*. Paterson asserts a constant Scottish defence of national ‘autonomy’, although differently defined in different periods, as responsible for the different forms of autonomy he outlines. However, the important aspect is how these ideas of autonomy and perceptions of Scottishness evolved, not merely in reaction to external changes in state, economy and society, but within the process of active political debate. Certainly in relation to Paterson’s account of our period, ideas appear to react to external social and economic pressures: thus



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the 'democratic deficit' becomes an issue as economic difficulties and the removal of the Imperial support structure necessitate the replacement of technocratic consensus with a return to the competitive politics of distribution. In contrast, a Skinnerian examination of the documents reveals the process by which a particular conception of Scotland and Scottish autonomy developed, and questions a number of assertions commonly made about the period within the dominant socio-economic tradition. Nevertheless, reasserting the importance of ideas in explanations of ideological and political development is not to *deny* the importance of other factors.

Paterson is explicit that his account is "an intervention in a political debate informed by an academic approach in the sense that it develops an argument from a theoretical position and cites evidence in support" (1994, p.6). This appears to support a criticism made by Finlay against many social scientific accounts of Scottish identity from a historian's point of view. Finlay notes that most recent scholarship on Scottish identity and the Union has been by social scientists as the constitutional debate is ongoing and "[h]istorians are cautious creatures who take their cue as to what is important in the past from...the present" (1997, p.4). He argues that such social scientific studies provide valuable theoretical frameworks, although often in specialised, inaccessible language. However, he argues that these tend to emphasise theoretical coverage at the expense of "microscopic analysis" and complexity, preferring "generalisations...often...not backed up with hard historical evidence" (1997, p.5) and often based on "interpretations of secondary...[rather than] primary sources. Yet it is only through...contemporary records that we can build up a picture as to how contemporaries perceived their national identity and its relationship to

the Union” (1997, p.5). In contrast, historians are “under no obligations to fit into any theoretical moulds. Ragged edges and untidy corners do not matter. The primary objective is to explain why things happened as they did at a particular point in time and this has to be based on historical evidence” (1997, p.5). While some might disagree, arguing that historians often merely seek to describe rather than explain, a Skinnerian approach provides a way of contextualising social science investigations in a more historically sensitive manner, particularly to the role of ideas and agents, through primary sources. To admit that this approach can add to social scientific understanding of Scottish politics and political history is not necessarily to admit Finlay’s criticisms. The importance of theoretical frameworks should not be underestimated in understanding political phenomena. However, to the extent that these frameworks explain anything, it must be ensured that they are soundly based, and a Skinnerian approach provides a way of insuring that, contra Finlay, theory follows rather than leads understanding. To the extent that such criticisms can be made, attempts should be made to address them.

An intellectualist approach provides a means to a more contextually aware political history as well as contributing to a more historically sensitive political science. Fry, in response to the perceived dominance of social and economic history, calls for the development in Scotland of “better political history. Much of our recent history is social and economic, and – I freely admit to bias – not very interesting” (1992, p.88). While this undervalues a number of academic contributions within that tradition, Fry’s call has some merit. As has been argued, the broad societal ideological context of the present can influence our understanding of the past and an intellectual history approach provides a way of

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overcoming this. As will be argued in the remainder of this chapter, a number of elements of the dominant interpretation are questioned by such an approach and the dominance of these perspectives can be perceived partially as the result of the ideological outcome of the debate and the creation of the discourse community. However, a ‘more political’ approach must avoid the danger of descending into a recitation of central figures and events, at the expense of the broader context, which the social and economic tradition pays attention to, and perhaps over-emphasises at the expense of ideas and agency.

Kidd (1993) illustrates the value of intellectual history in better understanding the relationship of history and identity, and the development of ideological contexts. Kidd examines the development of an Anglo-British ‘Whig history’ based on a predominantly English foundation, and the corresponding failure to develop a comprehensive ‘British’ Whiggism. He explicitly addresses his work to “both nationalists and unionists in the hope that...[it] might go some way towards explaining the origins of the problematic identity of the modern Scots – a majority of whom seem to be less than completely comfortable as Scottish or British nationalists” (1993, p.ix). An explanation of how the ideological developments of the first century of Union affected Scottish identity is developed from within the context of two strong ethnocentric ‘Whig’ historical traditions that linked national independence and liberty. Kidd argues that the English Whig tradition within its context was able to develop an evolutionary historiography based on an indefinite, and therefore flexible, original ‘ancient constitution’. The Scottish tradition, in contrast, was unable to undergo a similar development for two reasons: its historical foundation on the mythic, but chronologically specific, ‘Fergusian’ constitution (330 BC), and the need to

defend this basis even after Union, due to its implication in historiographical debates with the rival Scottish Jacobite historiographical tradition. When Jacobitism's political threat abated, Scottish Whiggism suffered from the legacy of convincing Jacobite critiques, now deployable without any associated ideological threat. The Scottish tradition further suffered from a loss of native support due to the 'sociological Whiggism' of the Scottish Enlightenment, which emphasised the contingency of the acquisition of liberty and a critique of 'original contracts'. While sociological Whigs also critiqued English Whiggism, Kidd argues that Scottish Whigs were able to adapt the evolutionary English tradition in a way that they could not do with its Scottish equivalent. As a result, "English history became the basis of British identity, but subject to a 'quality control' check from Scotland's sophisticated literati" (1993, p.212). Scottish history remained as a resource, but cut off from any real ideological force, such that "by the time that [Sir Walter] Scott was explaining Scotland to England, there was no grand narrative structure of national historiography by which to promote Scotland, other than that of social retardation" (1993, p.267). Liberty was now associated with the 'Anglo-British' tradition.

It is possible to disagree with some of the assumptions implicit in Kidd's argument. For example, even though Scottish Whigs provided a sounder basis for the 'Anglo-British' Whig tradition, to Kidd this remains predominantly English. This leaves unstated what a 'comprehensively British' synthesis would look like. Nevertheless, Kidd demonstrates the value of such intellectual history, which has three beneficial aspects: firstly, providing a history of political events in their own terms and within their complex contexts as representing the concrete actions of conscious agents; secondly, paying due heed to

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contexts as both enabling and inhibiting factors in structuring agent's interactions; lastly, recognising the effects of the interplay of agent and context in determining the ideological context of the present and the influence of this on our perceptions of the past.

History, both academic and popular, is implicated with identity as identity affects understandings of its past and historians build on current concerns and identity constructions. Historical contestations are, therefore, also contestations about identity, and historians should seek to avoid reifying present identity into the past. While there is a contested Scottish historiography, a dominant social and economic history tradition can be perceived. The predominance of this tradition can partly be attributed to the ideological context that results from the debate. An intellectual history approach provides a way of understanding ideological and political change without committing teleological errors and remaining sensitive to ideas, agents, events and context.

Although Finlay states that historians have offered little explanation for why the Union has been increasingly challenged (1997, p.3), three dominant historiographical narratives in relation to the constitutional debate are identifiable: an account of the debate as a process of identity change; an emphasis on economic factors within, and as a primary motor, for that debate; and the frequently voiced perception of Scotland as a left wing nation, which can be seen as an extension of the two previously mentioned historiographical narratives and owes its predominance to the creation of the discourse community in the 1967-1979 period. An intellectualist approach challenges and modifies all three of these conceptualisations.

### §3.1. Identity.

Given the central role of the SNP, a number of explanations for SNP performance inform understandings of the constitutional debate. Devine illustrates the priority of social and economic history understandings of the debate in stating a seemingly common presumption that “the rise of the SNP and the new centrality of the Scottish question...was based not so much on the party’s intrinsic attractiveness as on the broader historical context of the times” (2001, p.577). Many accounts of SNP success, and of the debate more generally, highlight *identity* as the key focus, providing an account of the debate in terms of identity change. Finlay notes that partisan divergence between Scotland and England has “helped to give Scottish politics a heightened sense of a distinctive national dimension” (1997, p.2) and that “many commentators” have associated this divergence with a “form of Scottish nationalist sentiment, with...a small n” (1997, p.1). Keating notes that “Scottish national identity...has strengthened in recent years” (1989a, p.234); Brand attributes SNP success to a rise in ‘national feeling’ (1978), while Bennie et al observe that:

“Since the 1960s...[a strong sentiment of Scottish identity] has been partially politicised from time to time by the activities of certain Scottish elites. Popular support for home rule thus depends on identity, rather than on a rational choice for an arrangement that might improve economic or other conditions” (1997, p.153).

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Certainly Scotland's constitutional position was propelled onto the political agenda by SNP success, and other parties forced to respond on national ground. However, this was not unfamiliar territory. The language of 'nationalism' in some form has long permeated Scottish politics. Hutchison notes that, although "[t]here is no obvious explanation for a heightening of Scottish identity in the middle 1960s and after, it seems clear that a strong feeling of Scottishness had long existed among people of every and no political complexion" (2001, p.121); Hanham recognises that "in cultural matters...the strongest nationalists have sometimes been those who in politics were the strongest Unionists" (1969, p.33). Scotland as a frame of reference was not new: Scotland was a distinct political unit within the UK from 1707 and economic planning had instilled the idea of Scotland as an economic unit before this period and prior to the discovery of North Sea oil. It is conceivable that the perception of Scotland as an economic unit had to already exist for the SNP 'It's Scotland's Oil' campaign to have any affect.

As explanation for heightened Scottish identity, Pittock states that, "[m]ost popular has been the view that ultimately the rise in the SNP was a response to the decline of the British Empire" (2001, p.118). As Hanham articulates:

“[a]t the height of its popularity, the Union was inspired by a sense of purpose. Scots felt that they were sharing in the great imperial venture and took pride in the achievements of Scots all over the world. Now that the Empire is dead, many Scots feel cramped and restricted at home...chafe at the provincialism of much of Scottish life, and the slowness of Scottish economic growth which is related to that provincialism” (1969, p.212).

Similarly, McCrone sees the rise of ‘The Scottish Nation’ to replace an economically decrepit Britain and British Empire, and so “[f]rom the 1960s the Scottish frame of reference figured more centrally as the key dimension in politics” (2001, p.25). To McCrone, in 1997, “the long march from Imperial integration had virtually ended” (2001, p.28). The rise of the SNP was an indication of the declining power of Britishness, “first in the white dominions, then in the Celtic countries, most notably in Ireland. The later threats from Scotland and Wales to secede from the United Kingdom undoubtedly have their roots in this period” (2001, p.16). The main implication of this for McCrone is indicated in the altered sub-title between editions of his *Understanding Scotland*: the first edition’s sub-title, ‘The Sociology of a Stateless Nation’ (1992) becomes ‘the sociology of a nation’ in the second edition (2001), implying a move towards statehood.<sup>71</sup> Brown et al (1998) note that though the decline of empire was not enough to fully explain the period, it provided an important backdrop. The ‘end of empire’, in this account, caused a decline of the utility of

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<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, McCrone asserts that Scotland was never a ‘stateless’ nation due to the retention to Scotland of elements of control through civil society (2001, p.1) and remains a stateless nation in the sense that it still lacks a sovereign Parliament (2001, p.6),



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Britishness; Scottishness filled the vacuum, most obviously signalled by SNP success. As Devine articulates:

“[d]eeper changes were underway which were to the...[SNP’s] advantage. ‘Britishness’ may have had less appeal than before. That linchpin of the Union, the British Empire, was disintegrating at remarkable speed...Britain was seen to be a nation declining on the world stage” (1999, p.578).

Or, to McCrone, Scotland is “a northern European country which has outgrown its junior partner role in British imperialism. Empire no more. Possibly Britain no more” (2001, p.28). By 2001, McCrone asserts that Britishness has become a “secondary identity to being Scottish” (2001, p.28).

Two recent discussions of identity in Scotland and Britain are useful in understanding these posited identity dynamics. Colley’s account of British identity coheres most closely with this view of the relationship of British and Scottish identities, and indeed McCrone (2001) and Brown et al (1998) explicitly reference Colley, while Devine (1999) does so implicitly. To Colley (1996) British identity was created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from commonalities of Protestantism, free trade and imperialism amongst the UK’s four national identities with which British identity coexisted. Colley also perceives a decline in Britishness, although not an inevitable one: “[h]istorians are poor prophets...that national identities have fluctuated over the past three centuries should make us particularly cautious about how we analyse the present” (1996, p.xi). Morton, in contrast to Colley,

asserts “the continued failure of a ‘British’ identity to find favour” (1999, p.1) and argues that through Scottish civil society the British state exercised ‘infrastructural power’ to govern Scotland in the absence of a fit between the state and its four distinct civil societies. According to Morton, in the event of an increasingly dominant British identity within a British state containing a complementary British civil society, peripheral identities such as Scottishness would be expected to decline (1999, p.14). That this did not occur demonstrates the lack of a unitary British civil society, although he admits that “Protestantism has done much to make notions of Britishness palatable to mainland nations” (1999, p.196). Britishness lacks the coherence of a united identity, as it means different things within each country of the UK (Morton, 1999, p.16). Morton opposes this to Colley (1996), arguing that while positing *dual* identities, Colley is mistaken in prioritizing British identity as an overarching inclusive identity:

“[a]s a Whig interpretation of the formation of British national identity, Colley’s thesis is one of the most forceful; but as a contribution to nationalism of the centre, let alone of the peripheries, its deficiencies are clear” (1999, p.16).

Colley, Morton argues, “misses all that is unique about the unitary state and the four nations of the [UK]” (1999, p.16). In Scotland’s case, this is the specific meaning of Britishness in Scotland as distinct from its meaning elsewhere in the UK: the “‘Scottishness of Britishness’...the singularity of being Scottish-and-British” (1999, p.20). To Morton, this uniqueness of Britishness in Scotland is the result of the gap between civil society and the state, and how Scotland was governed by its own elites, often missed by a

“non-sociological application of the political theory of nationalism” (1999, p.189).<sup>72</sup> As a result, “[w]e must be sure that we continue to ask ‘Scottish questions’ of the state and nation in the United Kingdom” (Morton, 1999, p.196).

Morton may be accused of misinterpreting Colley, failing to recognise the room Colley leaves for the distinctiveness of Britishness in Scotland and underestimating the force of Britishness as an overarching identity. However, both conceptions are compatible with the imperial decline narrative. Colley clearly gives British identity more substance, positing it as a coherent unified identity, while Morton’s conception of the interrelationship of Scottish and British elements of identity in Scotland provides the possibility of a more complex account of identity *within* Scotland. Nevertheless, at points Morton suggests a less complex picture of identity *change*. Thus, he argues that the model relationship between one state and one society does not allow the measurement of Scottish identity, “because it fails to account for the duality and even multiplicity in the relationship between British state and its four civil societies” (1999, p.189). However, his statement that “[a]t times a ‘British’ identity did dominate over a Scottish identity, but at times it patently did not” (1999, p.17) suggests a less complex picture. While the parentheses signal Morton’s critique of a unified British identity, the distinction of ‘Scottish’ and ‘British’ elements of identity in Scotland leaves his account of identity *change* open to the same accusation of ‘Whiggism’ he deploys against Colley. Such a distinction, and the downplaying of

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<sup>72</sup> ‘Unionist Nationalism’ is how, Morton argues, the Scottish elite ideologically structured the relationship between Scottish civil society and the state in the nineteenth century. This was a prevalent belief that to be Scottish one must be British, so Scotland could enjoy the benefits of Union; to be British, one must be Scottish, so Union does not descend into a *de facto* English take-over, but operates as a partnership.

Britishness as an external identity, runs the risk of perceiving 'Scottishness' as a constant interacting with other 'real' identities and British identity as ephemeral. This is a conception of the relationship of Scottish and British identity suggested by the imperial decline thesis: Scottish identity is perceived as 'available' for mobilisation as a strong, or at least stronger, default or subsidiary identity to a weak and declining, or ephemeral, Britishness. Declining 'Britishness' in such an account can appear linear and natural and Britishness appears to have little substantive effect on pre-existing identities.

Such a view is implied in Pittock's outline of his subject: "the nature of what is now Scotland's dialogue with the rest of these [British] isles throughout the last two Millennia" (2001, p.viii). In relation to the imperial decline narrative, Pittock, invoking a conception similar to Morton's 'Unionist nationalism', asserts that, "there must be some doubt as to how far Patriot Unionism...can survive in a Britain without its own international Imperial dimension" (2001, p.7). He conceptualises 'Britishness' as an essentially international identity compatible with local patriotism: "Welsh and Scotsmen played their part in designing British identity when it was international in scope: shrunk to an island, both find reason to object to it" (2001, p.10). The relationship between Scottish and British identity is here transactional. Britishness is acceptable insofar as it is beneficial; as benefits disappear, so does that acceptability. Brown et al (1998) and McCrone (2001) also articulate this view: "[b]eing British is a weak form of identity, and its confusion with 'English' is proof of that" (Brown et al, 1998, p.214). The 1707 Union was a "marriage of convenience" for distinct aims on both sides (Brown et al, 1998, p.4; also McCrone, 2001, p.27). Indeed, Brown et al further prioritise Scottish identity by asserting that:

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“in a crucial sense Scottish politics have always been nationalist insofar as Scottish interests have always been paramount in explaining the success and failure of the parties. Scotland’s relative autonomy within the UK has meant that parties are successful when they extend this autonomy” (1998, p.5).

As Brown and McCrone articulate, this “marriage of convenience” no longer suits (November 1998, p.1). As a result, “feeling British is becoming a matter of memory, of history, rather than of the future” (McCrone, 2001, p.28).

Thus, the narrative of imperial decline represents a broader conceptualisation of identity change in Scotland. Hutchison, however, questions the thesis that:

“no longer able to play a part in a larger world power, Scots did not wish to stay with the diminishing British state after the withdrawal from the Indian sub-continent and the African colonies, a process virtually complete by the early 1960s. The chronology is difficult here. In reality, it was the white dominions with which Scots identified - mainly because so many had relatives there as a result of continuing emigration. But the dominions had enjoyed a high-degree of self-government since the 1920s. The retreat from Africa and Asia after 1945 evoked little protest in Scotland at the dissolution of Empire: indeed the Church of Scotland criticised the government for not ceding independence in Central Africa sooner” (2001, p.121).

Indeed, Pittock cautions that, although British identity has declined, it is still “a stronger and more enduring beast than some excitable journalism gives it credit” (2001, p.12); both Keating (1989a) and Mitchell (1996a) emphasise the need to understand the strength of British nationalism in understanding changes in Scottish politics, and McCrone cautions that the decline of Britishness is not inevitable (2001, p.194). Nevertheless, the notion of a plausible “symbiotic relationship” between imperial decline and modern Scottish nationalism persists, although “more often adopted than explored” (Pittock, 2001, p.7). Such accounts risk, despite the cautions, providing an over-simplistic account of identity changes in the period, backdating modern conceptions of Scottish distinctiveness in the same way that Fry notes modern positions are taken on the 1707 Treaty of Union “on the basis of modern opinion rather than of what may have happened in 1707” (2002, p.49). Pittock hints at this:

“In the noonday of Empire, the events of 1707 were, for most historians, the culmination of Scottish history whose distinctive qualities had existed only to be subsumed: Bruce and Wallace...were the forerunners of the negotiated partnership of the British Empire, with its stress on the internationalism of the British concept” (2001, p.55).

However, once “doubt and decline set in, and the British imperial idea hastened to collapse, it was not unnatural that the ensuing provincialisation of Scotland has an impact on the interpretation of the Union” (Pittock, 2001, p.55). Fry re-describes this view as that “Scots exchanged national independence for imperial profit 300 years ago and now seeing

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no more profit in prospect, promptly reverse their loyalties” (2001, p.498). Brown et al, similarly, assert “the Scottishness that people in Scotland seem to want from their politics is in the framework through which material wealth is administered” (1998, p.18).<sup>73</sup>

All historians of Scotland, by definition, emphasise Scottish distinctiveness to some extent and the imperial decline account, with its attendant conception of Scottish identity, places the period within a clear linear account. However, as Morton and Morris recognise, Scottish identity “has been neither coherent nor progressive. It ebbs and flows, it backs up, and muddles along” (2001, p.357); while Colley cautions that:

“[j]ust as historians of today have come to realise that they should not take the invention of Great Britain for granted, so future historians may well need to be wary of writing the story of these islands...as though the break-up of the British Union was always...a foregone conclusion. Interpretations which present...inexorable linear developments will almost certainly be wrong...it is necessary to insist on the flux of identities over time, and on the variety of identities among different groups...at the same time” (1997, p.xii).

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<sup>73</sup> More recently, such narratives are often linked to the replacement of ‘imperial’ British identity by European identity. Brown et al, for example, claim that Europe has taken on the modernising/progressive mantle England used to wear in the age of Enlightenment (1998, p.23). Pittock, however, is more sceptical, again recognising the role of historical perspective in such accounts: “Europe is, like Gaelic signposting, a chic designer accessory to contemporary Scottish cultural nationalism not altogether sustained in society at large” but used to differentiate Scottish identity by placing it in a European context (2001, p.8).

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Finlay notes that prior to the post-Hamilton constitutional debate, British homogeneity was an assumption of historians but that this is no longer tenable. Thus, “Britishness in Scotland is something which can no longer be taken for granted as a natural development” (Finlay, 1997, p.3). The obvious danger is that linear narrative accounts of the debate as a result of identity change commit the opposite mistake and historically reify modern assumptions of difference, rather than of homogeneity. Finlay, indeed, perhaps betrays his assessment of the relative importance of Scottishness and Britishness in his language, describing his focus as how “British *political* identity” has coexisted with “Scottish *national* identity” (1997, p.3; my italics); while Pittock implies a direct link between Scottish identity and the SNP, as he does implicitly by entitling the chapter in *Scottish Nationality* (2001) dealing with our period ‘The Scottish National Party’:

“[a]lthough Labour did little in power to further a devolutionary agenda (...rather undermining it through nationalisation which placed the control of Scottish companies in English hands, as the Tories pointed out), this didn’t mean Scottish affairs were entirely neglected: indeed they received a surprising amount of attention given the one per cent of the vote obtained by the SNP in 1945” (2001, p.112).

It is not clear why it should be ‘surprising’ that Scottish affairs received attention despite a lack of SNP success; why nationalisation by the *UK* government necessarily places control in *English* hands; and why Conservative claims, made for partisan advantage, should be taken at face value. Such accounts polarise identity concepts on the basis of current conceptions and assumptions, rather than investigating what actually occurred to identity



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within the period. In contrast, an intellectualist account reconstructs the debate, and examines and illustrates concrete ideological transformations through primary documents. As periods of political change have ideological affects that alter how the past is understood, an intellectual history approach provides a more concrete and historically sensitive account of such changes. This thesis argues that rather than politicisation of a pre-existing identity in response to external factors and a replacement of British by Scottish identity, the constitutional debate does see a redefinition of Scotland's societal ideology. In contradistinction to the 'decline of empire' account and its associated conceptualisation of identity change, this redefinition of identity is more contingently related to partisan debate. This *can* be conceptualised as a "reconfiguring of Scottish politics around its sense of being a nation" (McCrone, 2001, p.7), but is more complex and less determined than implied by the identity narrative outlined above.

### §3.2. (Political) Economy.

Unsurprisingly, given both the economic situation within the period and the dominance of a social and economic historiography, many explanations of SNP success and the debate prioritise Scotland's economic condition and the electorate's economic dissatisfaction. Although analytically separated here, such explanations are not incompatible with accounts emphasising identity. Indeed, Finlay notes that "[f]or the historian of the twentieth century, the '70s were a difficult decade. Economics is intertwined with politics, and politics is entangled and suffused with economics" such that disentangling the two is difficult (2004, p.323). That the two accounts are not mutually exclusive is indicated by Devine's assertion

that “[t]he appeal of Britain has declined since the war with the end of Empire and relative economic decline” (Devine, 1996, p.5); and McCrone argues that:

“[f]rom the 1960s, the Scottish frame of reference figured more centrally as the key dimension in politics. The discovery...of North Sea oil opened up the political possibility of an alternative, and explicitly Scottish future. It was no accident that the discovery of oil and the rise of the SNP coincided. From the 1970s the Scottish National Party was in the right place at the right time, and provided a political alternative in the final quarter of the century when the British settlement began to fail” (2001, p.25).

The importance of economic expectations is found throughout historical accounts. Thus, according to Hutchison, post-war Labour was the party of economic development and the welfare state but was adversely affected by “intense disquiet and internal incoherence, caused by a blend of policy failure, organisational decay and a sclerotic adjustment to rapid social and cultural changes” (2001, p.128). He argues that SNP success resulted from “loss of faith” in both Labour and the Conservative’s ability to deliver economic and social benefits (Hutchison, 2001, p.122), as does Drucker (1978, p.8). That Labour recovered in Scotland and throughout the UK in the late 1970s emphasises, to Hutchison, the importance of economic explanations: government policies appeared to be finally working (2001, p.131). Finlay locates SNP success as a function of long-term structural problems in the Scottish economy, which, although not evident at the time, are noticeable in hindsight. Structural changes in a country over-reliant on declining heavy industry led to long-term

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unemployment problems insufficiently alleviated by the central planning ethos espoused by both Conservatives and Labour. Finlay argues that, therefore, “Scottish political behaviour in the sixties...was driven by expectations regarding state activity and economic and social well being”, and SNP support was the result of “the failure of the British state to fulfil the socio-economic aspirations of the Scottish people in the late sixties and early seventies” (1997, p.147).

Devine argues that more fundamental than the deeper identity changes outlined as part of the decline of empire thesis was the effect of economic changes. Economic planning had “created expectations which could not always be fulfilled” (Devine, 1999, p.158) and “Britain no longer seemed to be delivering the social and material benefits of the post war years” (Devine, 1996, p.5). Hanham notes the “startling in the extreme” contrast between Harold Wilson’s image of a modern technological society and “the economic facts of 1966 and 1967” (1969, p.182). Thus, “the outstanding feature of the period was the gap between the expectations of the people and what was actually happening.” (Hanham, 1969, p.181), while, to Harvie “between 1964 and 1970 Labour promised much and didn’t deliver...the voters, their expectations aroused and then frustrated took revenge”, with first the Conservatives and Liberals, and then the SNP, benefiting (2002, p.207).

It could be questioned whether this is strictly an account within the social and economic history tradition given the emphasis on economic expectations of the state, politics and the state’s economic planning role. However, as previously noted, it is not argued that social and economic history ignores politics and to the extent that economics was interlinked with

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state action in this period, it is inevitable that accounts from historians who would normally be identified within this dominant tradition must address the economic role of the state. Thus it perhaps might be more accurate to term this account one of political economy. Nevertheless, it is the social and, especially, *economic* role of the state that is prioritised in such accounts, and reaction to economic change.

Such understandings of the debate also underlie political science accounts. Mitchell, utilising a distinction (from Kellas, 1991) between nationalism's 'material' and 'psychic' (psychological) income (or force), while cautioning against underestimating the 'psychic income' of British nationalism argues that its appeal has *largely* been dependent on its material income, which declined in this period to the benefit of the competing Scottish nationalism. The latter correspondingly gained 'material income' in the 1970s from North Sea oil (Mitchell, 1996b, p.87). Brown et al, asserting the backdrop of imperial decline as a long term factor, emphasise the short term factor of economic change: Scots, happy until the 1960s with the UK welfare-state delivering economic and social goods in accordance with Scottish traditions, no longer saw the main parties capable of "delivering the goods" (1998, p.18). Thus, as the economic credibility of the system declined, support for a Scottish Parliament increased. Brown et al deny that this is a 'materialist' explanation:

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“it is merely to point out that the Scottishness that people in Scotland seem to want for their politics is in the framework through which material welfare is administered. It is possible to care about the framework passionately, but to judge any framework on offer first of all on whether it is believed to bring prosperity. Compromise on the Scottishness of a framework can be justified only on these grounds” (1998, p.18).

While the last statement seems more prescriptive than descriptive, it is unclear why this is not essentially a materialist explanation. Structural preferences are posited as ultimately determined by economic benefit. There is no suggestion here that if the ‘British’ structure had continued to provide economic benefits but less recognised Scottishness, there would have been a corresponding increased demand for a Scottish Parliament. Paterson (1994) similarly emphasises the long term effects of imperial decline and short term effects of economic problems, although paying more attention to the ideological effects of these changes, arguing that these circumstances challenged the technocratic consensus of the post-war Scottish state and forcing a return to the distributive politics of declining resources, rather than technocratic decision making.

Thus, this economic motivation account tends to reinforce the transactional account of identity change associated with the decline of empire thesis. They constitute long- and short-term conditions, respectively, for the constitutional debate. SNP success is widely perceived as a result of economic disillusionment and the debate as a political reaction to this economically driven success, in the broad historiography of the period. The explanatory variable is economic: as Hanham comments (although extending the period

explained): “[w]hat makes the demand for Scottish control of Scottish affairs so persistent is that since 1918 the Scottish economy has gone through a very testing period” (1969, p.27). The SNP is conceptualised as “a conduit north of the border for popular protest and dissatisfaction” (Kemp, 1993, p.102); “an effective party of protest and an even more effective way of making British politicians take note” (Finlay, 1997, p.148); while Devine argues that SNP votes:

“came to be regarded as an act of protest, a manifestation of Scottish discontent about government policy rather than a commitment to Scottish independence...opinion polls confirmed that only a small minority of those who actually supported the party in elections wished to see Scotland separated from the United Kingdom” (1999, p.575).

This conceptualisation sees the other parties reacting to SNP motivation, and the main division as between the SNP and others. Thus, “[w]ithout the rise and electoral success in the [1960s and] 1970s of the Scottish National Party...it is doubtful whether devolution would have assumed as prominent a place on the political agenda” (Bogdanor, 1999, p.119) and Labour’s “public support for home rule was founded on the paramount importance of halting the progress of the SNP, while...minimising factionalism on the issue amongst its MPs” (Devine, 1999, p.586). Pittock, who emphasises identity change as opposed to economic factors seeing demands for constitutional change as wider than merely economic claims, argues, singling out Finlay’s account, that “taken to its extreme” the economic narrative posits “modern Scottish nationalism as a kind of game, whereby

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concessions are extracted from Westminster by an electorate voting for a party it does not believe in, but whom it knows...is a Unionist bogey” (2001, p.119).

This is not to say the SNP are necessarily conceptualised as merely an epiphenomena on economic factors. Such accounts do not ignore positive elements of the SNP’s appeal such as sophisticated propaganda techniques, a recognisable new party logo and the presence of young, articulate candidates such as Ewing and Macdonald, which gave the SNP an air of modernity. However, these are seen within the larger, and predominantly economic, context that allowed the SNP to exercise these advantages successfully. Indeed, some accounts go further, arguing that economics motivate, as well as explain, the SNP. Bennie et al note that, although tempting to see the SNP as ‘post materialist’, “that would be quite wrong. The SNP’s nationalism is materialist. Its propaganda has focused on materialist concerns. Their message is ‘It’s Scotland’s Oil’ not ‘save our heritage’” (1997, p.11); Hanham asserts that “[t]he main reason why the SNP can afford to be a bit vague about constitutional issues is that its chief emphasis is now on economic development” (1969, p.202) and “culture is seen almost as an adjunct to economics” (1969, p.209); Brand argues that “[t]raditions may be used for propaganda purposes, but their preservation is not at the heart of the nationalist appeal...the SNP appeals precisely because Scottish people are worried about unemployment and declining industry” (1979, p.23).

Oil is often highlighted as giving credibility to the SNP’s economic case and marking a key change within the debate. Harvie argues that 1970s politics “resembled the children’s game of musical chairs: whoever was sitting on the right chair would inherit the bounty of

oil” (2002, p.209). He ties oil to a narrative of economic and imperial decline, arguing that oil reversed “the old Imperial paradigm: instead of Scots as exploiters, they were now the exploited, forced to submit to huge economic changes while denied a say in them”, referencing the SNP’s “shrewd manipulation” of oil (2002, p.209) and noting that the majority of seats that the SNP gained in the 1974 elections were in the newly oil-rich north-east of Scotland. To Harvie, oil changed the agenda and, along with Kilbrandon, “reanimated the SNP” (1995, p.207). To McCrone:

“[t]he arrival of North Sea oil fuelled the perception of Scotland as a separate unit of political and economic management and opened up the political possibility of an alternative Scottish future. The SNP was in the right place at the right time, making explicit the national dimension of the post-war consensus and providing a political alternative when the British settlement began to fail” (2001, p.117).

To Finlay, “[a]lthough there is little evidence to suggest that the discovery of oil had any major effect on the voting behaviour of the Scottish electorate it was important in giving the nationalist movement a significant psychological boost” (1997, p.151); Brand notes that oil does not explain SNP prominence in the 1960s, but aided the credibility of the SNP afterwards (1978, p.85); Brown and McCrone assert that:



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“It was no coincidence that North Sea Oil came on stream along with the SNP. Remember: the Scots had entered the Union for largely economic reasons. There was always a sense that they were much better off inside the Union – until oil came along. Whatever the merits and demerits in economic terms, oil had one massive impact on political psychology. It allowed the Scots to imagine an independent Scotland” (1998, p.5).

Pittock cautions that while oil “transformed the prospects of [an] independent Scotland” (2001, p.117), the SNP’s initial successes predated oil, long term effects were “negligible”, and so SNP “success could be read as a third party protest vote; or it was a means of defending Scotland’s deteriorating status as a branch plant economy; or a response to the ‘internal colonialism’...identified by Michael Hechter” (2001, p.118).<sup>74</sup> Hutchison also recognises economics “are not a fully comprehensive explanation of the party’s advance: in the most depressed and deprived areas where one might expect the ‘Oil plus Independence argument’ to make headway, the SNP stalled in the 1974 elections” (2001, p.123). There are, therefore, acknowledged reasons to question an over-emphasis on economic explanations, although, as illustrated, the broad historiography accords the economy significant motivational importance. In contrast, a Skinnerian examination leads to a conceptualisation of the increasingly economic focus of the debate as an *outcome* of

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<sup>74</sup> Hechter (1999), initially published in 1975, was influential within the debate. Hechter sees the ‘Celtic’ nations of the UK as politically and economically dependent on England. Pittock notes that Hechter’s thesis is “powerful if occasionally historically flawed” (2001, p.12) and McCrone notes that Hechter’s thesis has been largely dismissed academically but that the political appeal of such theories was a result of the intellectual climate of the 60s and 70s: “[t]he colonial metaphor seemed especially relevant at a time when the SNP was making headway...and when concerns about Scotland having a ‘branch plant’ economy were beginning to surface” (2001, p.64). He argues that the influence of such theories on “historians and socialists alike” was from the metaphor rather than as an explanatory account (2001, p.67).

the debate's partisan dynamics, rather than their cause. This is important for the ideological effects of the debate in terms of not only the creation of a discourse community but also partially explains the dominance of social and economic historiographical understandings of the debate.

### §3.3. Left Wing Scotland.

The third aspect of the broad historiography addressed concerns a frequent perception of Scotland by contemporary commentators on Scottish politics: that Scotland is a left wing nation. This perception is broadly borne out by quantitative data on Scottish political attitudes in recent years.<sup>75</sup> However, associated with this perception is an interpretation of the constitutional debate, which potentially reifies this conception of Scottish ideological difference. Again, while analytically distinguished this perception complements accounts of the debate as an identity narrative and as economically motivated.

This conceptualisation of Scotland's societal ideology most often refers to the post-1979 period, where voting divergence between Scotland and England became more clearly pronounced. Pittock argues that "[t]he post-1979 left have reclaimed nationalism as their own, refinding earlier traditions and intertwining the politics of self-government and solidarity" (2001, p.19); McCrone sees comity between sections of the left and 'nationalism', arguing that in the 1970's and 1980's "alternative versions of Scottishness associated with the SNP and nationalist elements in the Labour party sought to emphasise

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<sup>75</sup> See, for example, Paterson et al (1999).

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the gulf between Scotland and Britain” (2001, p.113); while Hearn argues that “left nationalism has had some success in achieving hegemony in Scotland” (2000, p.89) and identifies this within civil society networks in the 1990s.<sup>76</sup> Paterson sees a Scottish post-1979 left wing identity building on an existing foundation. In a collection of considerations on *Being Scottish* (Devine and Logue (eds.), 2002), he asserts a “long belief” within Scotland in equal distribution of opportunity and resources: “some of this left-of-centre culture grew most recently from the experience of 1979-97 but goes back to the 40s and 50s” (Paterson, 2002, p.209). Paterson et al (1999), unsurprisingly given commonality of authorship, agree with Brown and McCrone that there is a “social democratic consensus” in Scotland and, while this is “not that different from elsewhere in Britain...Scots have more left-of-centre policy preferences than the rest of Britain...Scotland is more socialist, more liberal and less British-national than the rest of Britain” (Brown & McCrone, 1998, p.16). Hearn asserts that what is distinctive in Scotland is that social democracy has “become closely associated with national identity and support for constitutional change, and these with the parties that have supported change” (2000, p.3); while McCrone more concretely articulates an ideology/substantive identity link:

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<sup>76</sup> Hearn, it should be noted, refers to what we term ‘societal ideology’ as culture, retaining ‘ideology’ for a “relatively explicit analysis and agenda” distinct from culture, a “loosely cohering set of assumptions and beliefs” (2000, p.10). While Hearn's distinction is not without merit, the terminology of this thesis differs in that it emphasises the role of what Hearn terms ‘ideology’ and agency in the creation of what Hearn calls ‘culture’.

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“By the end of the 1990s people in Scotland saw themselves as more socialist, liberal and less British than people in England...Defining oneself as a Scot is a way of expressing certain political values. National identity and political values are connected, so that to say that one is Scottish is to say that one has left of centre values” (2001, p.27).

Such commentators also often reference Scottish and English relations to class, again based on quantitative studies of contemporary attitudes.<sup>77</sup> Keating (1989a), Brown et al (1998), Brown et al (1999), Paterson et al (1999), Hearn (2000) and McCrone (2001) all note that many Scots tend to self-identify as working class, regardless of different objective social class or class of origin. Hassan and Warhurst argue that this results from a Scots culture “shaped by a more working class ethos and culture than England” (Hassan & Warhurst, 2002, p.16). McCrone provides a more analytical account of the link between class and Scotland’s distinctive societal ideology. He asserts that “Scotland is a class society”, that class underpinned most of the twentieth century’s popular movements in Scotland and that “Scotland’s history can largely be written in terms of class conflict and

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Class’ is defined as inter-subjective consciousness of the existence and meaning of social divisions deriving from economic factors. The uses made of class, rather than whether subjective views of Scotland’s class structure accurately reflect reality, is the direct concern. It can be questioned whether it is possible to have such an ‘accurate’ representation given the role of perception in our understanding of reality. David Miller et al note that theories of class range “along a continuum whose poles can be neatly seen as occupied by...Marx and Weber respectively” (1993, p.78). This thesis is closer to Weber in its recognition that “[t]he links between levels are looser and the causal flow can go in various directions: from economic position to consciousness and action...there is no overall story of a development through time from class structure, through class consciousness to class action, nor any underlying theory of ‘class interest’ that could explain such a development: the historical possibilities are much more open and indeterminate” (Miller et al, 1993, p.78).

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class politics” (2001, p.78).<sup>78</sup> Further, McCrone recognises, referencing Hechter’s internal colonialism thesis, that class and national identity are often rhetorically linked:

“Scotland was not only configured by class conflict, but some even spoke of the country as a class in and of itself. Describing Scotland as an ‘ethno-class’ colony of England has been a rhetoric of leftist and nationalist movements alike...while such theses have effectively been disproven by academic analysis, the theses of dependency and colonialism still retain a political and rhetorical force in the 1990s...Scotland and class seem to go together” (2001, p.78).

McCrone, argues that Scottish societal ideology, in the way that it refracts meaning, is the key, mediating factor between class structure and political action.<sup>79</sup> Given Scotland’s broadly similar class structure to England but divergent political behaviour, McCrone posits the difference as the mediating mechanism of class-consciousness, or the meaning attributed to the same events in the context of differing societal ideologies. There is a distinctive ideological meaning attributed to events in Scotland, such that “[t]he national dimension matters and operates as a prism through which structural forms are refracted” (McCrone, 1996, p.118). As a result of how Scotland’s societal ideology is configured:

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<sup>78</sup> Paterson, indeed, in his account of Scotland’s retention of autonomy post-1707, notes that the groups fighting over Scotland’s autonomy were normally competing classes, referencing Nairn’s assertion that the creation of a nation normally corresponds to the creation of a class within that nation (1994, p.180).

<sup>79</sup> McCrone recognises apparent opposition between perceptions of Scotland as a class society and the ‘Scottish myth’ of an inherently egalitarian, open Scotland but argues that both the myth and class have dialectically shaped Scotland’s self-perception, with the myth, in both conservative/meritocratic and radical/egalitarian interpretations, acting as ‘the American dream’ does in relation to inequalities in American society: forming part of the ideological backdrop of Scottish politics, and acting as a marker of Scottish distinctiveness. The myth and its interpretation are an important part of the mediating cultural consciousness between structure and action.

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“the narrative of class in Scotland is one in which issues of national identity play across issues of class. Scotland’s relationship with England has taken on ‘class’ connotations to the extent that class and nationality are often insinuated” (McCrone, 1996, p.116).

As previously noted, Fry asserts that “[m]uch...newer Scottish historiography parrots a simple minded leftist line that the story of modern Scotland consists of capitalist oppression where it does not parrot a simple-minded nationalist line that the story consists largely of England oppression” (1992, p.87). He reinforces the importance of such narratives by devoting a chapter each to ‘Socialism’ and ‘Nationalism’, as digressions within his narrative political history (1987). Fry implies that, “always assuming that a socialist or nationalist meaning can be read back...” (1987, p.4), such historiographies prioritise a particular political manifesto. Distance from such a political agenda, Fry claims, allows him to write:

“without teleology and prescription. I do not assume that Scotland can only be saved by an assembly under a Labour administration, as the portal to a participatory socialist paradise. Unlike the materialistic dialectic my approach admits of no meretricious symmetry and leads to no certain conclusion” (1987, p.5).

While Fry may overstate the case here, and certainly his claim for political distance can be doubted, a number of accounts do prioritise the ‘left wing Scotland’ and class conceptions, suggesting that Scotland’s ideological distinctiveness, as well as constitutive of current

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Scottish politics, is explanatory of the constitutional debate. The suggestion is that in such accounts modern differences are potentially reified historically.

Foster gives a particularly developed account of our period, which illustrates a conception of Scotland as both socialist and working class.<sup>80</sup> Foster emphasises the “continuing strength of the Scottish Left”, including the Communist Party (with Communists leading many of the key Trade Unions), and “those Labour Party members who, particularly in the Trade Union movement, rejected policies of partnership with big business” (Foster, 2001, p.477) as an important factor along with specific economic concerns about external industrial ownership, for why Scotland made a “specific contribution” to general UK politicisation in the 1970s (Foster, 2001, p.477).<sup>81</sup> Foster links this to devolution through the claim that this left was able to present an alternative to economic problems: “devolution set in strongly class terms” (2001, p.478). Oil accelerated concerns of external control as, with oil exploitation, “[c]herished areas of the Highland coastline were quickly subjected to a slash and burn economy” (Foster, 2001, p.480). Realisation of the implications, Foster argues, was slow but is demonstrated in MacGrath’s *The Cheviot*

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<sup>80</sup> Professor John Foster was Professor of Applied Social Studies at Paisley College. A Marxist, Foster was a contributor to one of the more influential contributions to the debate, Brown (1975). When he contributed to Brown (1975), Foster was lecturer in Politics at Strathclyde University.

<sup>81</sup> While he sees the SNP’s ability to take advantage of Labour’s organisational weakness as the third reason for Scotland’s particular contribution to UK politicisation, it is striking that Foster’s consideration of the SNP is extremely short. The section entitled ‘Socialism and Nationalism’ begins, for example, with a focus on Labour: thus Gordon Brown’s introduction to *The Red Paper on Scotland* (Brown, 1975) “captured Labour’s ambivalence to the National question” (Foster, 2001, p.485). His account of the SNP largely notes divisions between “those [in the SNP] who wanted to move in a leftward direction and consolidate the working class vote, and those who did not. By and large the latter won” (Foster, 2001, p.487) and quotes Harvie bemoaning the SNP’s lack of ‘radicalism’. The emphasis is on the role of the left rather than the SNP. Harvie, similarly, singles out in the opposition to HMG (1975), along with ‘nationalists’, the SLP “and an articulate far-left whose great artistic achievement were John McGrath’s ceilidh-cum-morality [play]...and Gordon Brown’s *The Red Paper on Scotland*” (2001, p.209).

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which Foster claims “spoke to” the working classes educated in the 1950s and 1960s who were “increasingly mobilized in the struggles of the 1970s” (2001, p.481). Thus, Foster links the economic motivation argument, a class narrative and emphasises the championing of devolution by the ‘left’. He ties together class and identity most closely through quoting McGrath’s retrospective comments on touring *The Cheviot*: “McGrath later wrote of the liberating effect on these audiences. There was now no need to play to the anglicised expectations of the literate middle class. The new audiences carried with them the raw, mongrel roots of a directly Scottish experience” (Foster, 2001, p.481).<sup>82</sup> Even more directly, Foster draws his conclusion that:

“While the industrial struggles of the 1970s lasted no more than four years, they profoundly changed identities. In a way working people now became the nation... Those who spelt out the issues were those who had led the struggles on jobs, wages and trade union rights. Perhaps this was simply because no one else wanted to take the initiative... How deep seated was this shift in identities? Like industrial struggle itself, it was in part contingent. But it was also rooted” (2001, p.482).

A number of accounts, particularly underlying social scientific discussions of Scottish politics, portray a revival of Scottish identity as an explicit defence of social democracy and welfare state values, these conceptualised as Scottish values. Hearn, arguing that since the 1960s middle class Scots running the welfare state had to redefine their role as the

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<sup>82</sup> While Foster links the left and national identity through McGrath, Harvie cautions that, “for every one of McGrath’s audience who was converted to his own Marxist position, ten saw the confrontation in national rather than class terms” (1995, p.186).



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welfare state declined, asserts the broad assumption of such accounts: “it is in this broad context of the growth and current retrenchment of the welfare state that shifting attitudes towards twentieth century Scottish nationalism should be viewed” (2000, p.126). Thus, Brown et al, defending their adoption of history as part of their approach, argue that historical contextualisation of current politics requires “going right back to the type of welfare state that was established in Scotland from the 1930s onwards” (1998, p.xiv). Why this should be the relevant historical context is unclear unless support for the welfare state is already conceptualised as an explanatory variable of Scottish political behaviour. Further, in seeking to explain SNP success in the 1970s but poor performance in 1979, they argue that:

“the answer probably lies in what is, in retrospect, a more important feature of the SNP’s success than constitutional politics directly. The SNP was, and is, an essentially social democratic party, just like the Labour and Liberal Parties. The votes for the SNP were as much votes for continuing the social democratic project in Scotland as they were a preference for a particular form of Scottish Parliament. When it looked as if the Labour Government could continue to deliver that project, the SNP waned” (Brown et al, 1998, p.21).

Thus, “the rise and...weakening of the SNP can be interpreted as the same phenomenon as the steady decline of the Scottish Conservatives...a continuing preference for the welfare state” (Brown et al, 1998, p.21). According to this understanding, Margaret Thatcher’s post-1979 programme to ‘roll back the state’ clarified that the option of a continued

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welfare state within an unreformed Union was no longer possible and the legacy was a self-perception of Scotland as more left wing than England. In this context, Brown et al argue, while elsewhere social democracy was blamed for economic problems, the Union was held responsible in Scotland and “social democracy remained a dominant political attitude” (1998, p.19). McCrone links this narrative to the broader identity narrative: the post-war social democratic welfare state consensus replaced the Empire and its decline within the UK led to nationalist challenges to the state. Finlay accepts the assessment of the latter period, that Thatcherite attacks on the welfare state, a bastion of a “populist sense of British identity...created and grafted onto Scottish society” (2004, p.330), were perceived as attacks on Scotland, although he cautions that identity is more than economics/welfare spending and that, in the 1970s at least, Britishness retained much capital. Paterson, similarly, suggests a feeling that the possibility of moderate demands being met was declining, although backdating this concern as developing from the 1960s, and asserting that “along with this has gone a cultural resistance to assimilation, creating a consensus of separatist nationalism right across Scottish intellectual culture, although not as yet in politics” (1994, p.4). While this latter assertion is doubtful, the general account can be conceptualised as an extension of the economic motivation argument, which Pittock, as noted above, argues ‘taken to its extreme’ sees voting SNP as a ‘game’ to extract concessions. In regard to the later period he notes that it sees “the resurgence of nationalism in the 1980s...conducted in defence of a British corporatism now seen as ‘a distinct Scottish cultural sphere’” (Pittock, 2001, p.119).

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Such accounts are often linked to a longer mythic narrative. As noted above, the discourse community builds on the ideological inheritance of the 'Scottish myth', which can be used to portray Scotland as an egalitarian society;<sup>83</sup> and as previously noted, the debate is often located within a historical narrative from the 1880s, and the common genealogy provided for the debate often includes elements perceived as part of a long 'radical' tradition, such as the Highland Land League. Morton notes that the myth of 'proletarian Wallace' opposed by the nobility, has "served to support the construction of a popular Scottish ethos, a collective spirit, a greater (than in England) sense of community" (2001, p.105), and the "rhetoric of proletarianism has been used to sustain both nationalism and socialism, not Scott's Tory Unionism...Wallace became a symbol of twentieth century democracy" (2001, p.111). PH Scott synthesises egalitarian mythic views in his assertion of a Scottish "instinct for egalitarianism and social justice" (1997, p.viii); his insistence that Wallace was "not a great feudal magnate but the son of a small landholder" (1997, p.1); and his statement that identification "with the suffering of the poor and...[condemnation of] the exploiters...sounds through Scottish literature" (1997, p.9).

Although Harvie cautions that "Scotland's 'red' reputation belied a proud Unionism" (2002, p.202), and Houston and Knox note that "Scotland's reputation for political radicalism in the twentieth century is...a rather new departure", the latter assert that "the image of a radical people is a powerful one and has some substance" (2001, p.1). Foster argues that the number of interpretations of Red Clydeside, a key event in such mythic narratives demonstrates "its continuing importance for the way Scots define themselves

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<sup>83</sup> See Chapter Two, p.121, fn.64.

today” (Foster, 1992, p.109).<sup>84</sup> Thus, although Harvie recognises that “[t]he legend of Red Clyde was just that” (1995, p.133), Foster asserts that belief in its revolutionary significance “to some extent...underlies a belief among many Scots today that as a nation they are somehow more proletarian and more militant than the English. Red Clydeside, Red Scotland” (1992, p.107).

Fraser demonstrates how this tradition can be linked to specific organisations, arguing that though Labour’s support for devolution was partly motivated by expediency, they can claim to inherit a ‘tradition’ of popular control, of which Labour, “in substantial part a Scottish creation”, is one reflection, although it “was the inheritor of a distinctively Scottish radical thread. Added to it were elements of socialism, but the moral reforming tone...would have been recognisable to its Liberal radical predecessors. It created a distinctly liberal social democratic tradition in Scotland” (2000, pp.ix-x). Thus, Fraser locates Labour within a native Scottish radical tradition from nineteenth century Liberalism onwards. Brown et al, recognising that Scotland is not ‘left wing’ or ‘right wing’ as such, argue that part of the reason for the perception of left wing Scotland is the presence of “strong socialist traditions” and that “it is possible to trace a fairly unbroken tradition of Scottish radicalism” (1998, p.152). They ally this to a dismissal of the Conservative party’s 1955 General Election majority in Scotland as a result of the party’s

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<sup>84</sup> ‘Red Clydeside’ refers to a series of strikes on Clydeside over such issues as food and rent, which convinced the authorities (and many on the left, in hindsight interpretations) that a Scottish Bolshevik uprising was imminent, prompting the Government to send tanks into George Square, Glasgow in 1919. As Pittock notes “[t]his absurd overreaction passed into the mythology of the Scottish left” (2001, p.103). The myth, being “that the Clydeside workers, led by SLP (Scottish Labour Party) shop stewards, enlightened by Marxist evening classes held by [John] MacLean and fired by the examples of the Bolsheviks, had come within an ace of revolution” (Midwinter et al, 1991, p.6).

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then ‘moderation’ (presumably in contrast to later) and association with Liberal Unionism: essentially association with an element of ‘the radical tradition’, broadly conceived. The radical tradition is rhetorically prioritised, partially through downgrading the perceived alternative: “Scotland is an anti-Conservative country in the sense that it has generally not voted for the party at any time since...1832”, with the “one significant exception” of the 1930s-1950s (Brown et al, 1998, p.170). Thus, “there is enough in Scottish political history to lend credibility to the idea that the country is, at least, left-of centre” although the “dominant source for that belief in the 1980s and 1990s has been the decline of the Conservative party since...1955” (Brown et al, 1998, p.153).

Brown et al are correct in observing that perceptions matter as much as reality and that “a new Scottish identity has emerged which is distinctly...more to the left of centre than before” (1998, p.218); indeed, Paterson identifies “an association of radicalism and home rule that by the late 1980s was to embrace most of the radical left” within the documents he chooses to represent the late 1970s/early 1980s (1998a, p.77), for example in Kennedy (1976), although he also asserts a “wholesale shift towards nationalism in Scottish intellectual culture” (Paterson, 1998a, p78) which is more doubtful. This thesis supports the perception in contemporary political science of increased ideological comity between nationalism and socialism, both broadly conceived, within Scotland’s societal ideology. This developed through the creation of the discourse community.

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The documentary chapters illustrate ideological dialogue but also that this is the outcome of partisan interaction within the constitutional debate rather than an explanation of the debate. Attempts to give this left wing conception of Scotland a historical lineage obscures rather than clarifies how that societal ideology was created and a proper understanding of the intellectual developments of the constitutional debate. Thus, Hearn's description of the language of the 'Scottish national movement' as tending "to oppose neo-liberal social policies and radical free market agendas...defending the ideas of social democracy and the welfare state, and associating these values and stances with Scottish history, culture and identity" (2000, p.x) is an accurate reflection of Scotland's societal ideology, at least in the 1980s and 1990s, and this builds on ideological developments of the late-1970s. However, accounting for the debate as reflecting a defence of social democratic values projects backwards historically the association of social democracy and Scottish identity that was developed within the discourse community created in the pre-1979 period. If the 'association' of social democratic values with Scottish history is taken at face value, it is unsurprising that Hearn (2000), for example, is able to identify liberalism and nationalism as strong and intertwined elements of Scottish culture historically. The more interesting question is how those links were prioritised as a way of understanding Scotland historically as well as how the present societal ideology was reached. Indeed, Hearn implicitly acknowledges this: discussing voting preferences and a tendency of Labour and SNP supporters to prioritise Scottish and working class identities, he recognises that these "do not so much explain political preferences as force us to ask why people identify in this way" (2000, p.5). Association of these values with Scottish history are part of the process of political contestation and should be examined as such.

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A Skinnerian examination demonstrates that the discourse community developed over the rhetorical divisions of partisan debate and was affected by the increasing concentration on the economy which results from these divisions. Through this process, conventions and commonality were established amongst a discourse community through the contingent elision of class and national boundaries and a partial ideological synthesis of 'socialism' and 'nationalism', both the subject of partisan contestation. To the extent that Scotland is 'left wing' this is an outcome of, not an explanation for, the debate and is the central aspect of the discourse community created between 1967-1979.

### §4. Conclusion.

As Cowan and Finlay state "[h]istorians at all times, whether subconsciously or otherwise, to a greater or lesser extent always create the past in their own image" (2002, p.1). The suggestion above is that the narratives outlined are partially guilty of this by not recognising the constitutive nature of ideological context. An analysis proceeding from the documents, in contrast, allows them to 'speak for themselves' and enables a more contextually sensitive understanding of ideological change and discourse community construction. To the extent that such an examination challenges the understandings outlined, it also helps explain why these accounts have become privileged historiographically.

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An intellectualist account allows not only a more historically sensitive account of ideological change, challenging a number of current understandings, but also contributes to debates on how to conceptualise Scotland's position within the UK. Fry notes difficulty at times distinguishing between the Scottish and British content of 'Scottish political history' (1987, p.1), and such confusion is not absent within political science. As Mitchell notes:

"Kellas suggested that there is a Scottish 'political system'...Rose...that Scotland was a 'sub-system' within the United Kingdom political system...Keating and...Midwinter...maintain that it is best to conceive of Scotland operating in a system of complex networks which link 'Scottish actors to one another and to non-Scottish networks' which permit some decisions to be taken entirely within Scottish 'networks', while others are taken at the 'UK level' with 'Scotland providing a distinctive input'. There is obvious confusion as to the nature of the state" (1996b, p.85).

Chapter Two noted the ideological inheritance of the '1707 myth', the institutional legacy of Scottish statehood. However, there is obvious disagreement on its significance. Thus, Paterson (1994) provides an influential account of the role of national institutions in maintaining Scottish autonomy (and identity) within the UK through periods of 'political management' (1707 to 1832),<sup>85</sup> burgh control (1832 to 1918)<sup>86</sup> and technocratic

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<sup>85</sup> 'Managers' were appointed by the PM to dispense patronage in Scotland and ensure the votes of Scottish MPs at Westminster, while the Church of Scotland controlled education and the poor law.

<sup>86</sup> Scottish affairs were under the control of the newly enfranchised middle class through local councils and appointed or elected boards, which also dealt with education, once the Church of Scotland could no longer



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administrative devolution.<sup>87</sup> Paterson contrasts this with ‘Unionist’ and ‘Nationalist’ histories, where the Union is perceived as the ‘end’ of Scottish history for good or ill respectively (1994, p.1). While this is a simplified contrast, there are discernible differences on the extent to which institutional distinctiveness is emphasized. Thus, Mitchell convincingly argues, using a concept from Rokkan and Urwin, that the UK is a ‘union state’, united over time in piecemeal fashion by conquest, dynastic marriage and treaty. In such a state, although:

“administrative standardisation prevails over most of the territory, the consequences of...Union entail the survival in some areas of pre-union rights and institutional infrastructures which preserve some degree of regional autonomy and serve as agencies of indigenous elite recruitment” (Mitchell, 1996a, p.38).

Mitchell suggests that Paterson overstates Scottish autonomy as, while, “[i]ntegration may have been ‘less than perfect’...there was still a strong centre. The union state was marked by centralisation and diversity and only limited autonomy for its component parts. It is not a decentralised or regionalised state. Scotland did not have meaningful autonomy” (2003, pp.211-2).<sup>88</sup>

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afford to provide this after the ‘great disruption’, the 1843 split between evangelicals and moderates in the Church.

<sup>87</sup> Scottish affairs were governed through the Scottish Office (see Paterson, 1994; Brown et al, 1998; Mitchell, 2003). This latter period overlaps with Burgh control as after the Scottish Office’s creation in 1885 there was a gradual centralisation of responsibilities. This period can be dated until devolution, although Brown et al (1998) identify a fourth period, from 1974, associated with nationalist challenges to this structure of governance.

<sup>88</sup> Midwinter et al make clear the Scottish-British relationship in this conceptualisation: “[t]here is a *British* political system which is periodically under stress *in* Scotland...the Scottish environment and civil society

Mitchell recognises that Paterson 'rightly criticised' perceptions of Parliamentary sovereignty as indicating an all-powerful centre but argues that he exaggerates in the other direction, reducing autonomy to bureaucratic influence in policy implementation and *underestimating* Parliamentary sovereignty and central financial control (2003, p.212). Mitchell, nevertheless, allows that the union state has a dynamic element: "[a]n inevitable consequence of the union state is that an official or state-nationalism and sub-nationalism (such as Scottish) can coexist...Circumstances will determine the degree of compatibility at any one time" (Mitchell 1996b, p.87). How Scotland 'fits' within the UK state, therefore, can change over time. As Mitchell states, the "key factors" within the Union have been "amity and flexibility" (1996a, p.38) or, to Keating, "[t]he union state has been a successful mechanism for managing...[the presence of both] assimilation and differentiation" (1989a, p.233)

This conception of the union state as a dynamic institutional structure is compatible with, and a contributory factor in, the creation the Scottish discourse community: "one consequence of having these peculiarly Scottish institutions is that public debates occur within a Scottish context. This has played a significant part in ensuring that a distinct politics exists" (Binnie et al, 1997, p.44; see also Keating, 1989a, p.242). However, the existence of institutions is not enough to provide distinctive politics: what is important is how institutions are operated and perceived. Thus, at times Scottish politics may appear more or less different than politics in the rest of the UK, as Paterson's schema illustrates.

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places specific demands on British government which is forced to produce responses which may be differentiated yet maintain the integrity of the British system as a whole" (1991, p.189). Scotland is "a stress point in the British political system" (1991, p.204).

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States, as well as civil societies, are dependent on supportive ideological foundations and, as well as affecting, are also affected by changes in societal ideology. To the extent that the union state concept is *premised* on differential structures of territorial management, the key ideological context is that of Scotland. The key to understanding how Scotland ‘fits’ within the UK is, therefore, the interaction of institutions and the ideological context within which they operate. How Scotland’s societal ideology relates to the institutions of the union state will affect how effective those institutions are, while changes in institutions will also affect Scotland’s societal ideology. Thus, while there are clearly limits to autonomy within a union state, the boundaries of this autonomy, within the broad necessity of maintaining the integrity of the state, are not clearly set. Conversely, the effectiveness and legitimacy of union state institutions is dependent on their relationship to Scotland’s societal ideology.

An intellectual history approach thus takes seriously the notion of the union state, and provides a means of examining its development. According to Hutchison, however, often societal/institutional frameworks are “perceived as static over time, or else their present complexion is back projected in an uncritical and undifferentiated manner” (2001, p.xii). For example, “there is a tendency among politicians and commentators of our own time to throw back into the past their present ideas of the Union, rather than see it as an organic development which has been changed and adapted over time to suit new conditions and circumstances” (Finlay, 1997, p.5). Thus, the frequent deployment of the ‘1707 myth’ could project back historically Scottish distinctiveness as currently conceived, reinforcing such tendencies with regard to identity and Scottish ideological distinctiveness. However, a more thorough appreciation and application of the flexibility of the ideological meaning of

these institutions leads to a more complex picture. This requires nuanced study of the ideological context and its relationship to the institutions of the union state as a dynamic process. This thesis is, therefore, compatible with the conceptualisation of the UK as a union state but emphasises the role of ideology in mediating the relationship of institutional structures and Scottish society. This can be illustrated in relation to Keating's endorsement of the union state. Keating sees the Union as one where "memory of statehood and the contractarian basis of the treaty has kept an option of independence open, and...produced a predisposition to contractualism as a way of renegotiating the relationship" (1989a, p.234). To Keating, the Union was based on institutions, shared values, economic interest, class and an imperial external support system. Changes in these account for the divergence of Scottish and English politics, weakening the integrative force of the union state. This mirrors accounts noted above. Thus, Keating argues that "the end of Empire exposed the weakness of British identity" with the EU as a potential alternative external support system (1989a, p.248). However, these changes, this thesis would caution are mediated through discursively constructed collective perceptions. Thus, the creation of the discourse community is compatible with conceptualising Scotland as a component part of a UK union state and enables understanding of that union state as a dynamic institution.

**National Identity and Nationalism: The Partisan Debate.**

**§1. Introduction.**

The discourse community develops within the constitutional debate: to trace its development necessitates reconstructing that debate. Such a reconstruction reveals two levels of debate. At one level, partisanship and strategic use of language is evident. At a deeper level of linguistic action, shared conceptions and conventions interact with this explicitly partisan dynamic. The effect of the debate's partisan dynamics on the ideological inheritance, the '1707 myth' long constitutive of Scottish politics, creates the conditions within which the discourse community is created. Rather than straightforwardly *politicising* Scottish identity, the debate's partisan dynamics *foreground* this previously 'banal nationalism', transforming an *implicit* shared Scottish nationalism into an *explicit* conversation on its evaluative meaning. Through this process the constitutional debate itself becomes a feature of the Scottish ideological context, within which contributors rhetorically locate themselves. Identity, therefore, *is* affected by the debate but the process is more complex and contingent than the linear accounts of identity change outlined in Chapter Three suggest.

## §2. Rhetorical Constructions of the Debate.

Evident within debate contributions is a common construction of the debate as between ‘nationalists’ and others, mirroring the transactional identity account and identity dynamics outlined in Chapter Three.<sup>89</sup> This characterisation is unsurprising within the debate, given the impetus deriving from SNP electoral success. It also informs perceptions of contemporary outside observers. Thus, Esman, an American academic, provides an account that characterises the debate as between the SNP and ‘...*the British response*’ (1975, title), once economic conditions allowed the SNP to “[seize] the political initiative” (1975, p.1). Similarly MacCormick’s title elides the constitutional debate and nationalism: *The Scottish Debate: Essays on Scottish Nationalism* (1970), while then Labour activist Harvie perceives a “dance to the music of Nationalism” (1998b, p.88). There is an element of truth in this characterisation. The SNP did offer a contrasting constitutional option to the other parties who were forced to react. Further, this rhetorical polarisation of the debate is evident within debate documents. However, this is often for strategic reasons. For example, Dalyell consistently asserts and seeks to reinforce such polarisation, as is evident in the elaborately titled *Why **not** all Scots support proposals for an Edinburgh Assembly: A Response to the Scottish Council Pamphlet from Tam Dalyell MP, West Lothian, the constituency Labour Party which contests the S.N.P. Chairman, who has come second in the 1962 by-election, 1964, 1966, 1970, February and October 1974, with three Tory, two*

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<sup>89</sup> Here ‘nationalists’ refers to the SNP. ‘Nationalism’/‘nationalist’ are used ambiguously in a number of sources, often as shorthand to refer to the SNP, at other times more widely. When used, the meaning will be clarified if not contextually obvious.

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*Liberal and six Communist lost deposits* (Dalyell, 1976).<sup>90</sup> The title indicates the author's predominant focus on the SNP and prioritises his authority on the subject by highlighting the prominence of the SNP candidate in West Lothian and how often Dalyell defeated him. Dalyell claims that now a Scottish National Party exists, polarisation around this issue will inevitably continue for institutional reasons:

“[t]he clamour for separation will be part of the Scottish political scene for the foreseeable future. It is wishful thinking to imagine that there is any way in which the demand for separation can be silenced...there is now the whole apparatus of a political party with men and women dedicated to, and with a vested interest of the mind in...separation” (1976, p.1).

The clear implication Dalyell draws is that the SNP cannot be appeased: “[i]f we try...they will simply and understandably ask for more until they get a separate country. You cannot appease the unappeasable...it is no good even trying” (1976, p.1). Dalyell's perceives a zero-sum game between 'separatist' nationalism and the status quo. As this is so:

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<sup>90</sup> This is a direct response to Labour's (slightly) less wordily titled *Why Devolution. The whole of the Labour Movement in Scotland is giving wholehearted support to the Government's bill for a Scottish Assembly* (1976). Dalyell (1976) therefore, addresses a specific party audience as well as being a contribution to the debate in general.

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“[t]here is a danger in presenting devolution as a response to the SNP. Party colleagues may or may not believe in the proposals for an Edinburgh assembly...I cast no aspersions on anyone’s honour. Besides anyone is entitled to change their mind...however, the Scottish electorate have got the impression that far more, and more important Labour party people than Tam Dalyell, are against an assembly...The fact that we are so widely thought to be motivated by expediency...is damaging in itself” (1976, p.1).

He carefully does not doubt the conversion of prominent past Labour devolution opponents such as Willie Ross, although this is strategic given the Labour audience being implicitly addressed, for a year later he calls Ross’s conversion “breathtaking”, referencing Churchill’s quip that it is “difficult to rat...infinitely harder to re-rat” (Dalyell, 1977, p.74). Dalyell suggests that rather than a policy *perceived* as opportunistic:

“[t]he way to save the Labour party in Scotland is to confront the Scottish electorate with the brutal reality - that an X against an SNP candidate really could lead to friends and relations in England becoming foreigners; passport controls at Gretna Green; industrial and commercial chaos; and consequences of all kinds that flow from the reconstruction of Hadrian’s wall” (1976, p.1).

As well as arguing that polarising the debate is *strategically* sensible, Dalyell insists that this reflects the fundamental truth that “[t]he very creation of an assembly would bring about a situation which was inevitably unstable” (1976, p.1): devolution is “a first step



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towards a launching pad for a one way street in the direction of a moving escalator to - a separate nationalist Scottish state” (1976, p.7). The existence of any assembly, which could not meet the expectations raised by “sections of the media”, would result in “every grievance, real or imagined...[being] ascribed to the parsimony of the English treasury. This cry would not be confined to SNP members. Most members, Labour or Tory, Liberal or Communist would have to echo it” (Dalyell, 1976, p.1). This would inevitably be worse when different parties held power in Westminster and Edinburgh, and an SNP majority would be more likely in an assembly than a majority of Scottish SNP MPs, Dalyell argues, because “a lot of voters will regard the assembly as an SNP thing” (1976, p.2). Once an SNP majority occurred, negotiations on independence would be unavoidable: as Dalyell sardonically (and ungrammatically) comments, “a little bit late for a Referendum then, would it not be” (1976, p.7). This institutional incentivised conflict would be heightened by the specifics of the assembly proposed.<sup>91</sup> Dalyell thus argues “[t]he real issue is whether we wish to dismantle the United Kingdom” (Dalyell, 1976, p.7). To him, therefore, it is not only *strategically* wise to polarise the debate, but also a principled choice: nationalism or unionism. That devolution is a ‘slippery slope’ to independence, and only independence or the status quo are viable, was a common anti-devolution argument and clearly had both principled and strategic uses. Dalyell illustrates both, accepting the principle, but also strategically using it to rhetorically unite SNP opponents.

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<sup>91</sup> For example, conflict would result from the lack of significant economic powers; the implications for the allocation of funds between Scotland and the rest of the UK (1976, pp.3-4); the institutional anomalies introduced into the UK constitution (1976, p.4). Most notable among the anomalies identified by Dalyell was the ‘West Lothian Question’ named after Dalyell’s constituency. This notes that after devolution the MP for West Lothian would be able to vote on health and education in Worcestershire, but neither the MP for Worcestershire nor the MP for West Lothian would be able to vote on health and education in West Lothian.

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JP Mackintosh provides a strategic *defence* of devolution in response, utilising a polarisation of the debate for opposite strategic ends. Acknowledging Dalyell's critique that some propose devolution 'out of fear' of the SNP, Mackintosh asserts that "this fear is realistic" (1976, p.3): two-thirds of Scots are in favour of self-government and may vote SNP "as one method of ensuring more attention to Scottish affairs, and this has come to be synonymous with a greater degree of self-government" (1976, p.3). However, he disagrees with Dalyell's conclusion. While it may be true that such people hope that commitment can be "modified, postponed or abandoned" (1976, p.3), once the danger is passed, "[t]he electoral threat of the SNP is real and there are no good reasons for thinking it has diminished or will diminish" (1976, p.3). As well as strategically employing a polarised characterisation of the debate and the charge of opportunism to *bolster* the case for devolution, Mackintosh also explicitly endorses devolution for principled reasons (1976, p.4).

The SNP itself often portrays the debate as polarised, strategically distinguishing themselves from other parties and portraying themselves as propelling the debate, with other parties as literally and metaphorically reactionary. Thus, SNP MP George Reid states that "[i]n a very real sense the Tam Dalyells and George Reids are at one. He may call it a slippery slope and I may refer to the regeneration of a nation, but...I do not believe that there is any middle ground between continuing Union and Independence" (*Q*, February 1976, p.5).<sup>92</sup> The SNP claims that they allow for Scots "to shape their own future and the

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<sup>92</sup> George Reid (1939- ) was elected SNP MP for Clackmananshire and East Stirling in both 1974 elections. After losing this seat in 1979, Reid was a presenter on BBC TV and radio, and public affairs director with the

## The Development of a Discourse Community

future of their children by choosing between two alternatives”, evaluatively described as doing what ‘every other country’ does and taking:

“responsibility for the government of our own affairs in our own hands...born of confidence in ourselves and of faith in our own ability...[or] to leave things as they are, so that Scotland remains an unimportant and under privileged region of the centralised and bureaucratic United Kingdom” (SNP, 1974 approximately, p.1).<sup>93</sup>

Such characterisations reflect perceptions held by participants, therefore, but also rhetorical strategy. This perceived, or strategically utilised, rhetorical division does affect the way contributors behave. Nevertheless, caricaturing the debate in this way is an oversimplification of more complex dynamics: the affect of interactions on the underlying ideological context.

### §3. Nationalism: The Evaluative Debate.

While the debate is often characterised as polarised, the effects of the partisan debate developing from 1967 are to *foreground* nationalism, which is not alien to Scottish political discourse, and to establish a debate over its evaluative meaning and ‘ownership’ amongst participants. The result is that rhetorically the relationship of debate contributors

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International Red Cross. In 1999 he was elected to the Scottish Parliament as List-MSP for Mid-Scotland and Fife, and in 2003 won the Ochil constituency seat. Reid became deputy Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and was elected Presiding Officer in 2003.

<sup>93</sup> The pamphlet is dated to the 1970s. It refers to an upcoming vote, either one of the 1974 General Elections or the 1975 referendum on EEC membership. This dates it to approximately 1974. Henceforth this will be referenced as SNP (1974).

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to 'nationalism' is not as polarised as suggested by characterisation such as those previously outlined. The meaning of 'nationalism' is neither clear-cut, nor clearly 'owned' by any side of the debate. The partisan debate that develops, therefore, rather than being between 'nationalists' and non-nationalists, is rather between different forms of nationalism. Through this debate partisan conventions and rhetorical divisions develop, which are important in the development of the debate and of the discourse community.

The main partisan dynamic is between Labour and the SNP. Labour clearly perceived this to be the case by 1977, when they published two pamphlets for party members both entitled *Attack: Defend our Record: Attack the Opposition* (No. 1, 1977a; No. 2; 1977b). The rationale for these pamphlets was that: "[f]or some time it has been clear that the Party needs ammunition to fight back against the SNP" (Labour, 1977a, p.1). Their primary, although not sole, focus was critiquing the SNP. However, this dynamic was clear from much earlier. Thus, in 1969 Labour published pamphlets specifically attacking the SNP. To a much lesser extent these pamphlets attack the Conservatives. This significantly illustrates the early-perceived prominence to Scottish Labour of the Labour/SNP as opposed to British Labour/Conservative partisan dynamic. The constitutional debate reinforces the centrality of this dynamic, confirming the centrality of the conventions developed across this rhetorical division.

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Labour attacks the SNP's policy of "complete separation from the rest of Britain" (1969a, p.3), and quotes Ewing that the SNP policy is "a fully self-governing Scotland severed from England" (1969a, p.5). The repeated use of separation instead of 'independence' in this pamphlet is perhaps recognition of positive evaluative connotations associated with independence, and a clear attempt at its (negative) evaluative re-description. Separation sounds more drastic and, when allied to terms such as 'severed', violent and disruptive. This terminology is also seen in Dalyell (1976, 1977) whose reference to the 'clamour for separation' was quoted above; in Sillars's co-authored *Don't Butcher Scotland's Future*, "the most sustained and important Labour response to the SNP in the 1960's" (Mitchell, 1996a, p.220); and is representative of Labour documents throughout the period. For example, Labour declaring its support for *Our Changing Democracy* draws particular attention to the White Paper's rejection of "separation for Scotland and Wales and the break-up of the UK", and its belief that the majority of the Scottish people endorse this rejection (Labour, 1974, p.2). Labour uses Scottish history to reinforce its case: "the Scottish Parliament of [the SNP's] dreams would be a battleground that would make Flodden and Bannockburn look like Sunday school picnics" (1969a, p.10). Linking SNP success to these historic battles between Scotland and England reinforces alleged SNP divisiveness. Here, despite the SNP's disavowal, albeit for strategic purposes, of 'separatism' in 1969, SNP opponents are (similarly for strategic reasons) polarising the debate and associating the SNP with 'separatism', a negatively evaluated form of nationalism.

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SNP 'separatism' is not merely rejected as divisive. Other common prejudices against 'nationalism' are reinforced and associated with this negatively evaluated nationalism. Thus JP Mackintosh accuses the SNP of parochialism (1976, p.2) and, recounting 'why I cannot join the SNP', asserts his opposition to "exclusive nationalism" (1982b, p.141); while Labour describes the SNP as having a "pygmy idea of 'Scotland for the Scots'" and "inward looking, tribal policies" (1969a, p.6). Labour's protection of Scottish interests is contrasted to the "narrow minded bigotry which under present day SNP banners is masquerading as patriotism" (1969a, p.15) and Labour argues that it would be "disastrous" if Scotland "based our future thinking on narrow emotional and inward-looking policy" (Labour, 1970, p.2). The SNP is thus criticised as 'emotional', 'parochial' and, further, 'irrational'. SNP policies in their "airy-fairy pamphlets" are "often contradictory" (1969a, p.4). Their economic case is "ill thought out...based...on the emotional rhetoric that oil revenues alone can bring success" (Labour, 1976b, p.2). *Attack* is "good fighting material" to help convince people that "Labour is their only sure and steadfast defence against *irresponsible* nationalism and the catastrophe of separation" (Labour, 1977a, p.2). Such arguments are often linked to a strong appeals for class interest rather than divisive nationalism: thus, a Labour attack on 'the Tories' over 'slum clearance' is followed by noting the SNP demanding action which the government is claimed to be already taking (1969a, p.11).

This negative evaluative description of *SNP* nationalism is often coupled with an attempt to de-couple it from positive associations of 'nationalism', and ascribe these to Labour: while criticising SNP 'separatism', another form of nationalism is affirmed. Thus, the

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economic consequences of separatism are “the grim reality behind the tartan-tinted emotions enshrouding Nationalist platforms. This is the *threat* buried in half hearted and often contradictory policies of people, who talk as if they had a *monopoly* of love for their native country” (Labour, 1969a, p.3). This implies ‘love for their native country’ is not the SNP’s sole preserve. Rather the SNP are accused of “cynically exploiting love of country for their own ends” (1969a, p.15). The context of the pamphlet’s argument that Labour is more effective at protecting Scottish interests implicitly associates ‘love for country’ and Labour. Association of party and nationalism is similarly implied in Labour (1969b), where the party’s devolution position and history is positively related. Thus, a 1958 Labour conference resolution in favour of ‘maximum self government for Scotland’ is referenced (1969b, p.2). This resolution rules out ‘separatism’ as any reform must safeguard “the social and economic well-being of them people of Scotland” (1969b, p.1), a frequent trope. By implication, ‘separatism’ cannot do this, and again negative aspects of ‘separatism’ are reinforced with repeated association of ‘separatism’ and ‘threat’ (1969a, p.4). However, while “the Nationalists today proclaim their favourite slogan ‘put Scotland first’...this is precisely what Scots Labour MPs have *always* done...to *this* extent – they too have been nationalists” (1969a, p.15). Labour (1970), indeed appropriates the word ‘independence’: “Scotland is moving ahead independently, with a Labour team at the Scottish Office” (1970, p.4). A distinction between kinds of nationalism is thus made. ‘Nationalism’, broadly defined, is recognised to have an (obviously emotional) appeal. Thus, the ‘Tories’ have “fallen victim to the *evident appeal* of nationalism...**tartan tinted Tories, stooping to grasp any ‘claymore’ with which to attack the Labour government**” (Labour, 1969a, p.8; my italics). By implication Conservatives are cynically using nationalism while the

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SNP are irrational, emotional and not to be trusted with serious matters, as Labour make clear in an (over) developed driving metaphor:

### **“Keep these L-Drivers off the Road!”**

The NATIONALISTS talk in one of their pamphlets about ‘a clear way ahead for Scotland!’

But they’d be well advised to *stop*! They haven’t passed their test!

They’re driving without maps...and political road sense!

They don’t know whether they’re going left, right and centre

And there are big doubts about their final destination - if they are ever going to get there.

...Don't let them get their hands on the wheel!

Be warned of the dangers ahead!

Keep *these* L-drivers off the road!” (1969a, p.10).

Nevertheless, in order to negatively evaluate SNP ‘separatism’, the legitimacy of *some form* of nationalism is clearly affirmed. A positive evaluative re-description of nationalism is developed in a way strategically useful to Labour, coupled with the negative evaluation of SNP ‘separatism’. Thus, Labour responses to SNP success, while they may explicitly polarise the debate, engage implicitly in an evaluative debate over the meaning and ‘ownership’ of nationalism, rhetorically associating national and party identities.



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However, the exigencies of partisan debate affect how claims of ownership can be made. Thus, while at this time Labour was opposed to devolution, because of the surge in SNP popularity, its immediate association with the issue of constitutional reform and the delicate linguistic operation of affirming and claiming the legitimacy of one form of nationalism while de-legitimising another, Labour is careful not to straightforwardly reject all calls for constitutional change on the basis of national identity. Thus, recalling the 1958 Labour conference resolution (Labour, 1969b) suggests Labour is not opposed to constitutional reform *in principle*. However, it is asserted that *in practice* such change is not in Scotland's interest: regional policy requires central control which **"strengthens our rejection that Scotland should be economically and politically torn apart from the United Kingdom"**, either according to the 'Eire model' of separation, or the Northern Ireland model of devolution (1969b, p.21), though ambiguously stating that **"[w]e wish to obtain the greatest possible devolution consistent with...the maximum possible influence on the economic and political policies of the United Kingdom"** (1969b, p.21). Asserting that the main condition for devolution is that it not weaken Scotland's influence in the UK, the authors reaffirm **"our basic socialist belief that the economic and social problems of any part of the United Kingdom are the common concerns of all, and can only be adequately resolved by concerted action on a United Kingdom scale"** (1969b, p.23). Such statements are often linked to critiques of the SNP, in that **"[f]ragmented we are weak, even powerless. Our strength lies in unity; a unity which transcends the narrow limits of prejudice and nationalism, and reaches out towards a democratic socialist commonwealth"** (1976c, p.23). Similarly, while JP Mackintosh, as previously mentioned, puts forward a strategic argument for *supporting* devolution he asserts that "there are also

much more satisfying motives” (1976, p.4) for devolution outside of responding to the SNP, and in outlining these asserts a form of nationalism. He gives a recitation and explanation of Labour’s policy changes on devolution, explaining that nationalism’s association with Nazism and the experience of the Depression led to the belief in the need for centralised control of the economy and Labour’s abandonment of devolution. In this context, saying “there were special Scottish problems seemed to be saying that kilts and bagpipes mattered more than decent living conditions and full employment” (Mackintosh, 1976, p.7). As a result, while devolutionists were not nationalists, “the fact that they were advocating devolution to a territory that had certain common national characteristics made it easy to attack them as if they *were* nationalists”, and many Labourites thought one must support the status quo or “be a nationalist of SNP type” (Mackintosh, 1976, p.7). Implicit is an acknowledgement of another kind of nationalism.

Labour critiques and anti-SNP strategies clearly become conventional in partisan debate, as does the associated evaluative debate. This is evident from non-Labour documents. Conservative MP Esmond Wright provides an extreme example of the violence metaphor in relation to “revolutionary notions of economic and political separatism” (MacCormick, 1970, p.111): “[i]n France the well meaning Mill and writer Lafayette gave way to Robespierre, and Robespierre to Napoleon; there followed Waterloo and the rest of the Bourbons” (Wright, 1998, p.18). Wright asserts that nationalism is a “parochial inward-looking movement” (MacCormick, 1970, p.104). The Home Commission was appointed, according to Home, “to steer the patriotism of the Scot into channels which were unifying and constructive” (1976, p.205): he here deploys rhetorical conventions of the evaluative

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debate on nationalism *against* 'destructive' and *for* 'constructive' nationalism. Similarly, Home (1970) entitles its chapter examining independence 'a separate Scotland', and a number of the critical tropes outlined above are clearly employed, as "[i]t is not difficult to appreciate the attraction of varying degrees of nationalism. But it would be wrong to recommend any such radical policy on the grounds of its emotional appeal" (1970, p.25). Negative connotations of separatism are reinforced, emphasising the costs of independence (1970, p.25). Similarly, the Conservatives Lang and Henderson assert, referring to the SNP, that, "Nationalists thrive on grievance politics - real or simulated" (1975, p.18).<sup>94</sup> The problem is that "the strength of the SNP in Scotland has been based on an emotional feeling... 'you cannot answer a poem with a balance sheet'" (1975, p.18). In response, it is necessary to espouse "a wider concept of nationalism than that espoused by the SNP", and "expose the nonsense of nationalism and the poverty of socialism", leaving Labour with their 'outmoded class concept' and the SNP "stranded on the rock of their parochialism" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.19). The focus is clearly the SNP, with only a ritualistic swipe at Labour. Another Conservative, Quentin Hogg, provides the template for this 'wider concept of nationalism' mirroring Labour arguments.<sup>95</sup> He calls for "a place" for nationalism within the UK, arguing that it represents a "malaise" in the traditional

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<sup>94</sup> Barry Henderson was Conservative MP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden February-October 1974 (Hassan & Lynch, 2001, p.253). Ian Lang (1940- ) was a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate in 1970 and 1974. In 1975 both were working in Scottish Conservative Central Office. Lang was MP for Galloway (1979-1983) and the successor seat, Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (1983-1997); Minister of State at the Scottish Office (1987-90); Secretary of State for Scotland (1990-1995); Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1995-1997). Lang lost his seat in 1997 and was subsequently created the Rt. Hon. Lord Lang of Monkton.

<sup>95</sup> Quentin Hogg (1907-2001) was MP for Oxford from 1938 until he inherited the title Viscount Hailsham, serving as First Lord of the Admiralty, Conservative party Chairman and Leader of the House of Lords under PM Harold Macmillan. Having renounced his hereditary peerage as part of an unsuccessful attempt to become Leader of the Conservative party in 1963, Hogg accepted a life peerage in 1970. The now Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone twice became Lord Chancellor (1970-1974; 1979-1987).

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constitutional balance, which has to be “put right” (November 1967, p.21). Hogg here affirms the legitimacy of some form of nationalism, conceptualised as an unthreatening corrective to UK politics, rather than transformative; although it is implied that nationalism may become threatening if these problems remain unsolved.

Recognition of, and attempt to co-opt, the apparent popularity of some form of ‘nationalism’ is also evident in the tone adopted by the Liberals (1976). While arguing for federalism, the tone of the pamphlet is ‘nationalist’, as evidenced in the view of Scottish political history presented which is unusual for a nominally unionist party. For example, the pamphlet references ‘economic coercion’ used to bring about the 1707 Union and rejects “the artificial Unionist State which was imposed on Scotland” in 1707, which “defies the natural aspirations of the Scottish people for self-government” (Liberals, 1976, p.11). These references seem oddly juxtaposed with the pamphlet’s recognition of the preservation of Scotland’s institutional heritage in its comments on ‘revising’, rather than rejecting, the Treaty of Union, which:

“may well have served us well enough in the past, and it did at least leave our legal service and the Church of Scotland intact; with the Union, however, Scotland’s Self-Government came to an end...it is precisely these terms and their consequences which are under attack...Scotland needs her Parliament again which she lost in 1707” (Liberals, 1976, p.8).

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Ambiguous terminology is also used: the party's aim is "the restoration of the Scottish State within the framework of the UK" (1976, p.11). This attempt to co-opt nationalism's popularity is matched with a more obvious attempt to de-legitimise the SNP's nationalism and polarise the debate while accusing others of polarising the debate, thus locating the Liberals in the rhetorically moderate middle: "[t]he Unionists have embarked with the SNP on a road of conflict which can only lead to growing bitterness between the national communities and might well provoke the very separatism they wish to avoid" (1976, p.11). The pamphlet mirrors Labour strategies, warning against SNP "extreme arguments" for "an entirely separate, independent Scotland" (1976, p.13) which would deny Scotland a voice in British politics despite British decisions still affecting Scotland; while the additional burden of providing currently joint services would be costly: "These motives of self interest are reinforced by the deeper bonds of culture and family ties. The people of this country are British as well as Scottish" (1976, p.15).

These attempts at evaluative re-description were challenged. However, there are indications that the tactic was successful in setting the rhetorical terms of debate. Kellas notes that the SNP "shun" the word 'separatist' (1976, p.64) and the SNP notably emphasises democracy as much as independence. Thus, independence will "do more than change Scotland from a province to a self-governing nation", release "the inventive energies of the people" and show how "a really democratic constitution can work" (1974, p.1). The SNP portrays their proposals through a positive evaluative description of independence as democratic. These linguistic tropes developed over the rhetorical division between Labour and the SNP are therefore diffused within the partisan debate and have an

effect on the SNP, setting the terms of the partisan debate. These tropes are so successfully diffused that they can be found in Kilbrandon which, although recognising positive aspects of SNP success, notes that:

“perhaps the greatest significance of the Scottish nationalism movement lies not in *its advocacy of separatism*, but in the means it has provided for the people of Scotland to register their feeling of national identity and political impotence” (1974, p.107; my italics).

This even though many Scots do not endorse separatism (1974, p.107). These tropes are thus found outside the explicitly partisan debate, although it is questionable to what extent *any* ‘contribution’ can be said to be *entirely* external to the partisan dynamics as these conventions are so integral to that debate. Thus the associated evaluative debate over nationalism is also diffused. Two more developed examples of this diffusion are evident in *The Scotsman* (1968) and by Robertson (Scottish Council, August, 1967). In *The Scotsman*, ‘nationalism’ is asserted as compatible with Union, as Hamilton was an:

“eruption of national feeling...partly a protest and partly the result of a movement that has steadily been gathering force though...ignored or ridiculed by the major political parties. Now nationalism must be taken seriously, not as a threat to Britain, but as an opportunity to create a more efficient and satisfying pattern for governing it” (1968, p.3).

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*The Scotsman* asserts that the renewed prominence of 'nationalism' is not due to a "calculating spirit" (1968, p.5), wishing to contract out of the Union now Imperial profit is no longer available. Scottish nationalism is a matter of 'faith' rather than economic calculation, as politics "is about people, their happiness, their loyalties, their opportunities for a fuller, richer life" (1968, p.8). This is an attempt to ensure that critiques often made against the SNP do not apply to *all* Scottish nationalism. Scottish nationalism is rather described vaguely as "faith in Scotland and a practical patriotism" (1968, p.5). Nationalism, in general terms, rather than specifically that of the SNP, is explicitly defended and positively evaluated. However, an implicit distinction is constructed between forward looking and reactionary nationalism. Thus, the "quest for self government" is not that for a lost "golden age" (1968, p.11). Rather, the aims of "those who want Scotland to have the power of shaping her own destiny" seem fairly unexceptional: for Scotland "to use the best of her talents and resources" (1968, p.6). 'Those who want self-government' do so as they "believe that it is a necessity for preserving Scotland's identity and enhancing her prosperity" (1968, p.7). Noting political cynicism, Scottish nationalism in the form defended is "an antidote to the fashion of saying self-interest is all. A faith based on a firm foundation of love of country, held in moderation, expressed with malice towards none, and dedicated to a noble end" (1968, p.8). The political pressure created by the SNP is consciously used here to argue for federalism. Thus, vague terminology is used: the aim is "a sovereign country within the federation" (1968, p.9). Further, distinctions between kinds of nationalism are deliberately elided:

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“Nationalism is often, and misleadingly, contrasted with patriotism. The one is narrow and evil, the other is natural and admirable. As long as it confines itself to St Andrew’s Day orations, patriotism is alright; when it takes the form of wanting to do something here and now about Scotland’s problems, patriotism, by some magical alchemy becomes nationalism, which threatens the peace of the world. Of course it is silly to describe nationalism as the root of all evil because Hitler called his ideology National Socialism. There is an infinite variety of nations and national movements, good, bad and mixed. Scottish nationalism is by no means a reactionary, aggressive, chauvinistic movement. There is nothing sinister about its aims or methods” (*The Scotsman*, 1968, p.6).

However, distinctions between types of nationalism are simultaneously reinforced. Thus, meeting these demands does not require independence, which would meet demands for control over internal affairs but “goes farther than would be necessary to safeguard Scotland’s ability to solve her own problems” (1968, p.7). History and geography dictate co-operation on such things as defence and most nations, even if nominally sovereign, lack ‘independence’; preferable is a ‘balanced’ federation, which would give Scotland all she required. Nevertheless, “total independence would be within [Scotland’s] power if the federal system proved impractical or unsatisfactory” (1968, p.10). Thus, a gradation of constitutional options is envisioned between Union and ‘full’ independence, along which Scotland could comfortably travel. Rather than a ‘slippery slope’ there are stable median points. Further, as with Hogg, a link is established between this positive re-description and an implied threat: relations of self-governing Scotland with England would be better than



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those with a dissatisfied partner. Scottish nationalism is “singularly free from hatred, and there is no reason why it should appear *unless legitimate desires were thwarted unreasonably*” (1968, p.7; my italics).

The title of Robertson’s article, “Nationalism in a technological age: an argument for Scottish Independence” (Scottish Council, August 1967), is an indication of a more extreme example of evaluative re-description, particularly the use of the term ‘independence’. That this ‘argument for independence’ appears in a business magazine whose audience traditionally opposed independence would immediately raise questions in the minds of that audience. That such an article should appear there at all shows the seriousness with which ‘nationalism’ was being taken.<sup>96</sup> However, the context of use dilutes its association with the SNP, as is surely intended. Robertson notes that nationalism “is a subject on which confusion of ideas and emotions abounds” (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.20), implying immediately that the terms should be more rationally assessed, associating nationalism with ‘emotionalist’ irrational confusion while simultaneously suggesting that *he* will offer more rational assessment. To demonstrate the confusion surrounding the term, he asks a series of rhetorical questions, which reinforce the opposition of emotionalism and rationalism:

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<sup>96</sup> This article was published after SNP successes in Scottish local elections but before Hamilton. Although some members of the Scottish business community would come to support the SNP, including prominent businessmen such as Sir Hugh Fraser, these constituted a minority of a predominantly unionist business community throughout our period.

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“Is Scottish Patriotism the afterglow from battles long ago, or is it the necessary response to a London centred apparatus so overloaded with other preoccupations that Scottish issues are neglected? Does nationalism imply Scottish independence? To such questions there is no end” (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.20).

Scottish *patriotism*, implicitly the same as Scottish nationalism, is either a historical remnant or a ‘necessary response’ to centralisation and the terms used clearly evaluatively prioritise ‘necessary’ nationalism. Only in the last question is Scottish nationalism mentioned, questioning its relationship to independence. The thrust of the pamphlet is that independence is not a requirement of nationalism, and the fact that this is phrased in question form suggests the relationship is debatable. Placing this next to questions evaluatively prioritising ‘unthreatening’ patriotism reinforces this. Robertson’s positively evaluated ‘nationalism’ (as opposed to emotionalism) is increasingly a focus of life because “the nation provides the machinery used by the people of a country to look after their interests at a time when changes are happening faster than ever before” (Scottish Council, August, 1967 p21). The ‘nation’ here is the institutional machinery for a ‘people’, apparently a naturally existing unit of sentiment; while nationalism, without making any reference to independence, is merely ‘looking to’ institutions on a national level to solve problems which affect the (unspecified) ‘interests’ people share as nationals. Robertson immediately qualifies any separatist implications: nations are one of a number of units in which we organise our lives from ‘the family to the UN’, and in this sense the nation is an “entirely valid and necessary operational unit: interdependence does not conflict with independence” (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.22). The initial opposition of nation with,

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for example, Britain or international organisations is thus overcome: the nation is an essential stage of organisation, and independence does not require SNP 'separatism'. How relations are organised will depend on the nation, but the 'unique' character of Britain allows Scotland to keep "alive the strong sense of national identity which is the essence of a nation" (The Scottish Council, August 1967, p.23). This is an "identity in diversity" (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.24) as the Scottish nation performs some functions and the kind of nation Britain is allows the Scottish nation to maintain itself and perform these functions.

It must be recognised that while this evaluative debate is developed through partisan interaction, it was also affected by, and interacts with, external contexts. Thus, at the start of our period international factors provided an important context that affected this evaluative debate on nationalism. The contemporary consensus, shared beyond the narrow confines of the Scottish or even British context, was that nationalism had been discredited by Nazism and the events of the Second World War, was of declining relevance in the modern world and was, as Dudley Seers described it, "obviously evil...getting in the way of creating a just, peaceful and prosperous world society...[nationalists] may have economic grievances but these could be put right by some redistribution of income" (quoted in McCrone, 2001, p.1). The movement towards larger supranational and intergovernmental trading blocs such as the EEC offered an additional challenge. This context was also utilised within the evaluative debate. Thus, the Liberal party argues "in an age of increasing interdependence across national frontiers, the triumphs of separatism seem rather shallow" (1976, p.15). *The Scotsman* (1968) explicitly addresses the first part

of the international challenge.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Isobel Lindsay notes that the debate is clouded by confusion, due to viewing nationalism as either morally good or bad, rather than something “which in its broadest sense of attachment to a territory or cultural community is morally neutral. To define nationalism in abstract as good or bad, she argues, is rather like saying that the sex-drive in abstract is good or bad whether it be rape or between consenting adults” (Kennedy, 1976, p.22). Indeed, Lindsay seeks to rhetorically utilise common prejudices against nationalism by distinguishing between morally neutral nationalism and ‘imperialism’, positively evaluating the former: though the former can degenerate into the latter, “[a]ttachment to one’s own community in no way implies any desire or necessity to deprive others of similar rights” (Kennedy, 1976, p.22).

Ludovic Kennedy acknowledges the force of the second element of the international challenge, acknowledging that “superficially the most convincing argument” (1968) is that nationalism is a retrograde step in an age of increasing internationalism.<sup>98</sup> However:

“the further you remove a man from the sources of power that govern him, the more impotent and frustrated he will feel and therefore the bigger the unit becomes, the greater must be the self-government within it...nationalism is the base on which internationalism is founded” (1968).

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<sup>97</sup> See above, p.196.

<sup>98</sup> This one page pamphlet of Kennedy’s speech was privately published by the 1320 Club, which was re-established after Hamilton but would be proscribed by the SNP in 1971. According to Kemp the club became “associated with extreme fundamentalists” (1993, p.103).

This international discourse on the legitimacy of nationalism is another reason for the SNP to emphasise their nationalism's forward looking nature, its 'normality', choice and democracy: "Scottish control of Scottish affairs is our aim, Democratic action by the ballot box is our method" (SNP, 1974, p.3). However, this was not only an issue for the SNP. Those seeking to co-opt a form of nationalism for their own cause also needed to address this hostile international context. JP Mackintosh in his explanation of Labour's changes of policy recognizes that, although "[n]ationalism was a dirty word after the Nazi era" (1976, p.7), this view is "clearly out of date" (1976, p.10). Nevertheless, he also notes that this change does not extend too far as, he asserts, 'independence' is impossible in the modern world, except perhaps for superpowers (*Q*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1977, p.5). *Scotland's Claim to Self Determination* (Macgill et al, March 1st 1979), held in the National Library of Scotland, illustrates that this external context changed over time.<sup>99</sup> Although this is not a major document and probably very few debate contributors were aware of its existence, this petition to the United Nations Director of Human Rights asserting Scottish self-determination demonstrates a friendlier international environment. Indeed, an increasing use of international contexts with which to *support* demands for constitutional reform is also evident in the SNP (1974), which calls for a no vote in the referendum on membership of the European Community to emphasise Scotland's openness to the 'wider world'. Similarly, the Liberals use international examples to support federalism: "it is generally acknowledged that, but for federalism, Canada as we now know it would not exist. In any

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<sup>99</sup> This is a typewritten, privately produced document signed by 63 individuals. The document notes the UN's recognition of the 'Self-Determination of Peoples', references 'the Claim of Scotland', and with a certain amount of hyperbole states that Scotland is "the only nation in the free countries of Western Europe without Self-Government" (McGill et al, March 1<sup>st</sup> 1979).

other system the French-speaking Province of Quebec would have chosen separatism against its own interests” (1976, p.13). JP Mackintosh (1976) similarly uses external examples in favour of devolution.

Thus the partisan debate, structured around the main rhetorical division of Labour and the SNP, develops tropes and foregrounds an evaluative debate over nationalism and its ownership. Strategic attempts to mobilise ‘nationalism’, positively (re)described, and associate national and party identities are made along with, in some cases, an associated negative evaluative re-description of alternative forms of nationalism. Other parties and non-party contributors reinforce the partisan tropes and the associated evaluative debate over nationalism developed over this main rhetorical division. Despite common oppositional rhetoric, the debate is not between ‘nationalists’ and non-nationalists but *kinds* of nationalists. This evaluative debate on nationalism affects the ideological underpinning of Scottish banal nationalism.

#### **§4. Invoking identity.**

That all debate contributors can appeal to ‘nationalism’, broadly defined, is not purely a strategic response to the exigencies of partisan debate but due to the presence of Scottish ‘banal nationalism’, which is, in established nations:

“a continual ‘flagging’, or reminding, of nationhood...a continual background for their political discourses...In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in the world of nations...this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (Billig, 1995, p.8)

These “forgotten reminders” (Billig, 1995, p.8) are not only found in such visible manifestations as a Saltire flying unnoticed over the National Gallery of Scotland but also in “the embodied habits of social life...[including] thinking and using language. To have a national identity is to possess ways of talking about nationhood” (Billig, 1995, p.5). It is neither a new nor surprising observation that Scotland has a banal nationalism: the ideological inheritance of the ‘1707 myth’ has already been outlined. This banal nationalism has also long been evident within the political language of Scotland. Scottish identity is both explicitly and implicitly evoked across the political spectrum. It is too extreme to claim identity invocation as prerequisite for contributing to Scottish political discourse: there were a number of non-Scottish contributors to the Scottish constitutional debate and Scottish politics is implicated in a number of overlapping rhetorical contexts, most obviously the British context. A case could be made that invocation of Scottish identity by contributors within the debate is an attempt to locate their contribution within the purely Scottish discursive context, although the Scottish constitutional discourse is open, for example, the contributions from Hogg or Esman referenced above. Nevertheless, in the terminology of Berry, recognition of this underlying feature of Scottish political

discourse is an element of Scotland's 'social grammar' and necessary for its full understanding.<sup>100</sup> How contributors locate themselves indicates both how the debate relates to the underlying ideological context of banal nationalism and how this is changed through interaction. Indeed, that invocations of identity are as evident as they are is instructive. While Scottish politics had long been characterised by an underlying ideological context, this is foregrounded by the debate's partisan dynamics. Indeed, one frequent location technique is helpful in delineating the effects of the debate on Scotland's societal ideology: the debate is notably self-reflexive, with frequent explicit considerations of central concepts. It is a common location strategy to use the contemporary prominence of the constitutional issue to explicitly address such central concepts as nation and nationalism, unsurprisingly given the evaluative debate over nationalism. This aids the identification of conventions central to Scottish banal nationalism and how these are affected by the discourse of the Scottish constitutional debate.

#### **§4.1. Is Scotland a Nation?**

Discussions of nation generally reinforce Scotland's existence, shared identity, and explicate the shared reference points in relation to which that identity is located. In some cases the first of these exercises is explicit. Some authors feel the need to address whether there *is* a Scottish nation, although the 'questioners' remain illusive. Robertson begins his discussion by asking "[i]s there a Scottish nation - and if so what is Britain?" (Scottish Council, August, 1967, p.20), while Kellas begins his discussion by elliptically answering

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<sup>100</sup> See Chapter One, pp.71-73.



this question, asserting that Scotland is *obviously* a nation.<sup>101</sup> He clearly perceives this to be asked, although pointlessly. Paton, similarly, states this question is ‘preposterous’: Scotland is one of the oldest nations and, “in any case whatever the characteristics necessary to constitute a nation, the most fundamental is conscious of nationality, and this Scotland has never lost” (1998, pp.18-19), a sentiment with which Kilbrandon agrees (1974, p.101). Easton strongly dismisses the question from a Marxist perspective: to ask if Scotland is a nation is a sign of “the destructive influence of English imperialism on national consciousness...to suggest that because of the weakness of national consciousness there is no nation...is to run the risk of applying the same logic to class consciousness” (1970, p.3).<sup>102</sup> Despite the oppositional tone, Easton does indicate one reason for the question being asked: the intended audience is the English, external to the Scottish discourse but present within the British context.

As the debate progresses this apparently pressing question of Scotland’s nationhood ceases to be answered. It can be surmised that Scotland’s existence as a nation is increasingly taken as self-evident, even to those outside Scottish political discourse. Thus, Esman identifies Scotland as “an open, compact unit of the British political system where claimants to political power can freely propagate their views and argue for political action” (1975, p.1). Even the most prominent critics of constitutional reform do not raise this question. Dalyell (1977), indeed, continually *invokes* Scottish identity implicitly: for

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<sup>101</sup> Professor JG Kellas is currently Emeritus Professor of Politics at Glasgow University. His most notable contribution to the study of Scottish politics was *The Scottish Political System* (1989), first published in 1973 and for many years the standard textbook on Scottish Politics.

<sup>102</sup> Norman Easton, here writing as a member of the Scottish Workers Republican Party (SWRP), would later join Sillars’s SLP and edit *Crann-Tara*.

example, asserting, “it is time *we* Scots faced a harsh reality...*We* Scots would get less than at present” after devolution (Dalyell, 1977, p.2; my italics). Nevertheless, he criticises those who seek to define Scots and English oppositionally. Recognising historical conflicts and a tendency to define Scotland against the English ‘Other’, he asserts that ‘only a bigot’ would see justice always on one side: while Scots have, “[l]ike the Irish...a strong and pervasive sense of history...all too often they prefer the romantic myth to the complicated truth” (1977, 280). Thus, “one of the great myths which the nationalists have exploited...is that...the sturdy but outnumbered Scots, throughout their history have been oppressed and done down by their English neighbours” (Dalyell, 1977, p.280). Rather, “Scotland has preserved her own identity and character throughout 270 years of fruitful and mostly rewarding Union with England. We have no need for misleading, belligerent myths with which to bolster our self-confidence” (Dalyell, 1977, p.284).

#### **§4.2. The Institutional Nation.**

As well as reinforcing the Scottish nation’s existence and responding to a perceived external audience, there is an almost unanimous agreement that the Scottish nation is located by its distinctive institutions: the ‘1707 myth’ is reinforced. Easton’s account of Scottish nationhood, emphasising the ‘Celtic’ nations’ ethnic distinctiveness from England and geographic separation from each other (1970), is notable in its comparative novelty. Like Easton, the description of the Scottish nation given by Kellas is developed by comparison with England (1968, p.1), but is both more analytically elegant and representative. Kellas emphasises the importance of institutions. In defining whether a

place is a nation, Kellas argues the same problems apply to England as to Scotland, the only difference being the English willingness to use 'England' and 'Britain' interchangeably, often unaware of the difference (1968, p.3). Obviously, consciousness of nationality is important. However, the implication is that the frequent elision of English and British, and that Britain is clearly a state, removes the question of national existence where England is concerned: 'statehood' confers legitimacy on a nation. Kellas argues that as the "two Englands" (1968, p.3) are separable and 'England the nation' is analytically distinct from 'the British state', Scotland can be seen as a nation without a state. Nevertheless, Kellas notes, Scotland retains the identity it developed when it was a state, and hence Scottish identity has continuity. Clearly institutions are the important factor in creating and maintaining national identity. To Kellas, Scotland is "not a state (in the sense used in federal systems)" (1968, p.3), suggesting that Scotland is a state in another sense. She is more than a unit of local government, having "preserved important institutions - law, religion and education and politics" (Kellas, 1968, p.3). Indeed, "the modern educational system, the reunited Presbyterian Established Church, the political and administrative organs and the economic enterprises" (Kellas, 1968, p.1) are evidence of continuing identity, retained through these institutions. The role and centrality of institutions is further reaffirmed in Kellas's discussion of the diversity of Scotland: "Although Scotland is in many respects a unity, especially when Scottish institutions are considered, there are also striking differences within the country" (1968, p.25). This implies that the institutions *are* Scotland and it is to them that the continuing strength of Scottish identity is attributable. Scottish identity is invested in these institutions, which hold Scottish identity together as a unity. Indeed, Kellas's description of Scotland is

structured around these institutions. Kellas warns us not to overplay national distinctiveness, however, as class differences may be “as great as the differences which divide nations” (1968, p.17) than those between nations.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless:

“Scotland is not just an abstraction; it is a tangible reality. Just as the foundation of the Scottish state produced the Scottish nation, so today the existence of a wide range of institutions and quasi-institutions which are Scottish perpetuate Scotland and its society” (Kellas, 1968, p.17).

Indeed, in many cases reference to these institutions itself acts as invocation, and description, of the nation. Scotland is an ‘institutional nation’.<sup>104</sup> Thus, JP Mackintosh invokes the traditional institutions, noting that the English often forget the distinct Scottish institutions exist (1976, p.4). Gavin McCrone (1969, p.9), the Liberals (1976) and Dalyell (1977) similarly note the retention of institutions.<sup>105</sup> Robertson notes that Scotland has old and new institutions that allow her “to do some of her own thinking and within limits shape

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<sup>103</sup> Indeed, Kellas, despite his emphasis on institutions, notes the presence of a powerful ‘proletarian’ culture’, a problem in defining a ‘Scottish’ culture as “[o]nly a leisured, wealthy society can support organised culture, and Scotland as a whole has never had such a society” (1968, p.12). Although a disputable claim, he asserts that only Edinburgh had the social infrastructure for such a cultured society. Again, by implication the institutions carry Scottish culture. However, there is also recognition that this is predominantly an elite culture.

<sup>104</sup> Nairn sceptically notes, in response to Paterson’s argument for the role of institutions in maintaining Scottish autonomy (Paterson, 1994), that, “no one ever responded to this interpellation [‘who are you?'] with a short lecture on the benefits of the sheriff system, the merits of Scottish generalist education or the advantages of not having one’s politics. Or, if anyone ever did it would have been to see their interlocutors eyes glaze over in bored disbelief” (Nairn, 1997, p.206); and asserts that it takes “articulate, theoretical animals”, such as Paterson and McCrone, 250 pages to make the case for such an institutional identity (1997, p.206). The claim of this thesis is not that, as Nairn sardonically argues, institutional explanations are given in response to ‘who are you?’ but rather that institutions are seen as carriers of Scottish identity and reference to them can be a rhetorical location strategy.

<sup>105</sup> See above, p.192 and p.206 respectively.

her own destiny” (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.24). These make Scotland a nation rather than a ‘region’, an administrative unit doing little of its own thinking and lacking distinctive institutions. Home, in discussing the “imperfectly understood” (1970, p.35) contemporary decentralisation of government in Scotland, similarly invokes traditional institutions: the relationship between constitutional reform and education and the legal system. Further, Home argues that the proposed convention should avoid conflict with “ecclesiastical bodies which periodically comment on Scottish affairs” (1970, p.66), referencing the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The conception of Scotland as an institutional nation is, therefore, widely shared and reinforced through the debate. The emphasis on the role of institutions in maintaining national identity is consistently reiterated. Rose, an English observer (although at the time Professor of Politics at Glasgow University), cautioned that these institutions “are best considered departures from the ‘British norm’”, and that a person moving from England to Scotland “would consider the differences more important than the similarities” (1975, pp.3-4), while the writ of Parliament runs throughout Britain. This may underestimate the *perceived* importance of these institutions within Scottish political discourse, although certainly this is an important caution, analogous to Mitchell’s corrective to Paterson.<sup>106</sup>

Robertson emphasises that the existence of institutions itself is not enough, but requires a common identification of the people covered by and operating those institutions as co-nationals. JP Mackintosh asserts “a different atmosphere [in Scottish Universities] either

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<sup>106</sup> See Chapter Three, pp.173-174.

from Oxbridge or from English redbrick universities” (1976, p.4), referencing the egalitarian Scottish education myth, part of the broader myth of Scottish democracy.<sup>107</sup> This indicates one potential version of the form of this common identification expressed in and through these institutions. Even an outsider to Scotland repeats this myth with regard to Scottish education: “Scottish professional education was more readily available and superior to the English, at least until World War One” (Esman, 1975, p.1). Similarly, Kellas claims that Scotland’s self-image emphasises egalitarianism and democracy, evident within Scottish institutions, such as the ‘lad o’ pairts’ in education and democratic governance of the Kirk.<sup>108</sup> A self-awareness of the ‘mythic’ aspect of these values and their mismatch with reality is evident. Kellas asserts, although Scots might consider his comments unfair, that “[r]omantic love and lyricism may have been inborn in Burns, but they are conspicuously absent in most Scots. A hard climate and a hard economy do not produce a nation of lovers, nor indeed a people who show much sensitivity of any kind” (Kellas, 1968, p.16). However, Kellas argues the egalitarian myth is evidence not of its fulfilment but “striving” (1968, p.16). Thus, the institutional nation, demonstrating the ‘democratic myth’ outlined in Chapter Two, is reinforced.

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<sup>107</sup> See Chapter Two, p.121, fn.64.

<sup>108</sup> The ‘Lad o’ Pairts’ is an intrinsic part of beliefs about the Scottish educational tradition. The Lad was an intelligent “boy of modest social origins from a rural or small town background [who] climbed the educational ladder to such professions as the ministry...” (in Bryce & Humes, 1999, p.212) According to the traditional myth, the ‘Dominie’, or local teacher, would look for students capable of undertaking university education and, if the student had insufficient means, raise funds to pay for his education from the local community. RD Anderson notes that the myth ignores those not fortunate enough to obtain the teacher’s patronage, and therefore the Lad is not representative. Nevertheless, some Lads undoubtedly existed (1989, p.53) and, as with any myth, more important than the representativeness of the myth was that the Lad o’ Pairts was believed to exist.

### §4.3. Multiple Identities.

Scottish identity is not perceived as closed, although anchored in Scottish institutions: recognition of the wider context is evident. Kellas, after examining traditional institutions, considers the distinctive political and administrative arrangements for the handling of Scottish business in Westminster, Whitehall and Edinburgh, implying the institutions determining Scottish distinctiveness are not all hangovers from independent statehood; Robertson agrees (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.24). Kellas identifies Scotland as a nation but not a 'nation-state', although a nation with important institutions: what exists is a British nation-state, which has recognised Scottish national feeling. Although the UK is not a federal state, "it has federal tendencies, both in its constitution and in the spirit in which it is operated. A delicate balance is maintained between the forces of unity and...separation which make up the relationship between its constituent parts" (1968, pp.18-19). Robertson also sees Britain as a "[n]ation embodying a group of smaller nations, and with its own common institutions - of which government is only one. The fact is that we contrive to have two different levels of organisation in the country and call them both by the same name" (Scottish Council, August 1968, p.24). What seems implied is a nationality both open and compatible with others. Dalyell, in contrast, sees the UK state as "unitary" (1977, p.3). It is not clear how this is compatible with his implicit invocation of Scottish identity unless he shares Wright's view that Britain is a 'unitary state' but 'federal society' (Wright, 1998, pp.23-25). This seems compatible with Kellas's view, although Dalyell may be inconsistent. Dalyell, however, in emphasising that "[t]he basic aspiration of the majority of the Scottish people is to remain British and not dismantle the United

Kingdom” (1976, p.5), also implies a compatible co-existence between identities. To the Liberals, Scotland is “a nation within a nation” and Scots seek to “recover control over their own affairs without breaking the links of affection and self interest which bind them to the other national communities of Britain” (1976, p.11). Even where the contributor favours independence, there is recognition of more complex plural identity. Thus, the SNP MP Gordon Wilson warns English MPs determined to defeat the devolution Bill that they will endanger close bonds between the two countries, and “the real integrity of the...[UK] is the bond of fellowship that exists between the peoples of these islands, no matter which nation we belong to” (Press release, 28th June, 1978).

The idea of a more complex identity is most strongly articulated by JP Mackintosh. Explaining why moves toward devolution will not necessarily lead to a ‘slippery slope’ to separatism, Mackintosh notes that since the Union:

**“[i]n practice the Scots have developed a dual nationality; they are both Scottish and British. Some of the institutions that matter are peculiar to Scotland and create a sense of identity while others...are purely British...The Scottish regiments have their own qualities, uniforms and traditions but they are also part of the British army” (1976, p.12).**

Rose supports this dual identity perception, but notes that this is peculiar to the minority nations within the UK as, he claims, the English do not distinguish between England and Britain. Indeed, “[g]iven the vast differences in population size...those who live in its non-



English parts [of the UK] must inevitably accept the preponderance of English influence...in government by institutions of majority rule” (1975, p.3). Paton agrees and uses this to argue for self-determination: “is it too much to hope that our English brothers might at long last develop a truly British patriotism which would regard Britain as something more than an English possession of a few recalcitrant provinces not yet completely assimilated” (1998, p.21); Kilbrandon also supports the existence of dual identity but notes irritation in Scotland at the frequent elision of England and Britain (1973a, p.101). Maxwell, however, dismisses this idea in the confrontationally titled ‘The trouble with JP Mackintosh’ (*Q*, March, 1977). He ambiguously praises Mackintosh as “right about Scottish politics more often than any other Scottish MP” but argues that he lacks “the gift of identifying with any of the distinctive currents of Scottish opinion which intellectually more fallible politicians such as...Jim Sillars and even Willie Ross have displayed” (*Q*, March, 18<sup>th</sup> 1977, p.5). Maxwell offers Mackintosh’s isolation in London (and in Labour) as explanations for his view of Scottish identity. He argues that Mackintosh is both “superbly lucid” and “hopelessly flawed” in his assessment of the SNP as not representing ‘genuine’ (cultural) nationalism but the result of weak government adversely affecting the British side of a dual identity (*Q*, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1977, p.5). Rather, Maxwell argues, “cultural identity need not depend on literary culture alone. It can draw sustenance from other areas of culture, from social institutions or even...from [a] distinctive political ethos or institutions” (*Q*, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1977, p.5), referencing Scotland’s institutional identity. He asserts that ‘dual identity’ is less convincing to a less committed Brit than Mackintosh, and the residue of a rapidly declining British identity associated with the end of empire. Mackintosh, he asserts, lacks a “developed appreciation of the historical

conditions making for a revived sense of Scottish identity” (*Q*, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1977, p.5). Thus, Maxwell, although he sees British identity as declining, does not dispute its existence. JP Mackintosh responds (in ‘The Trouble with Stephen Maxwell’, *Q*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1977) asserting that he does not ignore imperial decline and neither decries or recommends dual identity but merely recognises it, dismissing both Maxwell’s attempt to find excuses for his view in psychological isolation as well as the idea of ‘genuine nationalism’: “since there is no isolatable Platonic essence of nationalism, the sentiments which do exist and have existed in Scotland are neither proper nor improper” (*Q*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1977, p.5).

Ludovic Kennedy (1968) asserts, as does Maxwell, a change of identity in Scotland, noting that Union “was to be a free and equal partnership and it was never our intention that Scotland should be disenfranchised, [though] in effect she was, and became a sort of glorified English province. But at the time we were too weak and poor to protest” (1968). Union brought stability, and Kennedy admits, “we helped you govern the Empire” (1968), neatly recognising Scottish imperial success but avoiding responsibility. Nevertheless, Kennedy states that “it may seem to you as it does to many of us” that the Empire was all that kept Britain in existence” (1968). Kennedy posits a change of identity in Scotland after Empire, making the Scots and English more distinct: only the English, Kennedy asserts, see themselves as British while “most of us up here think of ourselves as Scottish” (1968). Similarly, Ewing (1968) draws comparisons between Scotland within the UK and former Imperial dominions in the Commonwealth (1968, p.3). It appears that the end of empire argument is most common in SNP contributions. Kennedy and Ewing’s use here, however,

is in contrast to the nationalist academic Paton's use, also from 1968, illustrating a more ambivalent relationship of nationalism to Empire:

“it can hardly be said about the Scots as it used to be said unfairly about the Irish that they are unworthy or incapable of self government. They have been far too successful in governing other people (including the English) for this to sound even plausible” (1998, p.18).

The imperial decline thesis is also critiqued by *The Scotsman's* assertion that Scottish nationalism, positively re-described, is not a calculating opt-out of Empire once profits disappeared (1968, p.5). The imperial decline thesis, therefore, is present but neither dominant nor unchallenged. Nevertheless, there is an explicit debate over the relationship between British and Scottish national identities evident within the documents of the period.

Kennedy demonstrates most clearly that this debate is strategic and partisan, rather than an uncontested transition from one identity to another. Kennedy's *The Claim of Scotland* (1968) invokes a common Scottish interest and claim within the debate.<sup>109</sup> He uses rhetorical techniques to assert a common identity with his audience, as well as foregrounding that identity's distinctiveness from England. Thus, as well as addressing the

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<sup>109</sup> The title implicitly references Scottish history. This is the same reference as Paton's *The Claim of Scotland* (1968), or the Scottish Constitutional Convention's *Claim of Right* (1989). The reference draws authority from national 'claims of right' such as that in 1689 accepting William and Mary of Orange as Monarchs on conditions respecting Scottish autonomy; 1843, in protest at perceived government interference in religion; covenants in 1638 and 1643, in opposition to Charles I and his centralist, Anglican government and in 1949 to petition for a Scottish Parliament. Hearn (2000) argues that this represents a Scottish covenanting/'bonding' tradition. However it is questionable how many in the audience would, in Austin's terminology, gain 'uptake' of this reference.

audience present, Kennedy addresses an absent audience, the English, on behalf of himself, the audience and 'the Scottish nation': "[f]riends, enemies, Englishmen, hear now the claim of Scotland" (1968). This ironic implicit reference to the archetypal English bard Shakespeare emphasises opposition between Scotsman and Englishmen, distinguishing between Scots (who may agree or disagree with him), and 'Englishmen', implying commonality amongst the former despite disagreements, against the latter. Kennedy seeks to reinforce these divisions by a recitation of Scottish/English relations: thus in 1603 "*our* king James the VI of Scotland became *your* king James the I" (1968; my italics), implicitly invoking the grievance of the referral of the British monarch by the English numerical designation.<sup>110</sup> The use of the inclusive collective pronouns reinforces speaker/audience identity while psychologically and spatially separating them from the English. Nevertheless, rather than a clear picture of the decline of British, in preference to Scottish, identity, the documents reveal both an agreement that there is a relationship between multiple identities to be debated and no clear identity dynamic. In identity terms, the debate is rather one of active contestation.

#### **§4.4. Institutional Nationalism.**

The nation and nationalism are often conflated in discussion. Thus, Robertson asks a series of questions explicitly addressing 'nationalism', which refer to the nation rather than nationalism: "[i]s there a Scottish nation - and if so what is Britain? Are nations in general

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<sup>110</sup> This refers to Lord Cooper's 1953 judgement in John McCormick's case against the use of 'Queen Elizabeth II' on the grounds that there had never been a Queen Elizabeth I of Scotland.

outworn forms, stumbling blocks to international action...Or are they the ultimate defence of freedom” (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.20). Such conflation is common. The implication is that the two are not conceived separately, that nationalism is not seen as problematic but the natural outcome of the existence of Scottish identity. Thus, to Robertson, as previously noted, positively re-described/UK compatible ‘nationalism’ is increasingly a focus of life because “the nation provides the machinery used by the people of a country to look after their interests” (Scottish Council, August 1968, p.21). Nationalism, in this sense of the defence of traditional institutions, is common and commonly assumed to be naturally implied by the existence of Scottish identity as represented by distinctive national institutions. Robertson’s suggestion that nationalism might be a ‘necessary response’ to over-centralisation (Scottish Council, August 1967, p.20) is similar to Kellas’s argument that not just the nation but nationalism is institutional. This ‘institutional nationalism’ is based on Scotland’s institutionally transmitted Scottish identity and its accompanying myths; it is also impelled by Scotland’s institutional position within the larger British constitutional framework. Scottish distinctiveness from other regions of the UK, particularly Wales and Northern Ireland, is due to the voluntary nature of the 1707 Union, Kellas argues, and the continuing “overwhelming consent to the Union” (1968, p.5). Even those who would never become political nationalists, he notes, feel Scottish. As the smaller nation in the Union the threat of assimilation is perceived as ever present, and although some would welcome assimilation, Kellas notes, others see the necessity for some form of nationalism to preserve Scotland’s identity (1968, p.19). Clearly, Kellas informs us, Scottish nationalism is not linguistic (1968, p.8): rather it is institutional, referring to the existence of national institutions and their place within

Britain. The emergence of a more explicitly political nationalism of the SNP is a challenge to this traditional banal nationalism. This is what is referred to when the 'politicisation' of Scottish identity is asserted. However, clearly the process is more complex, as shown by the evaluative debate over nationalism that emerged after Hamilton.

#### **§4.5. Partisan Invocations.**

As well as reinforcing aspects of the ideological context of Scottish banal nationalism, through identity invocation, rhetorical location is established in relation to the debate and its partisan conventions. Through this process, the debate itself, its conventions, tropes and rhetorical divisions, become ways of invoking Scottish identity. The constitutional debate becomes partly constitutive of the Scottish societal ideology.

Such partisan invocations occur explicitly or implicitly. Thus, the introduction of JP Mackintosh's *A Parliament for Scotland* (1976) explicitly asserts the pamphlet's constitutional credentials. As well as emphasising the Scottishness of the proposals within the title, the introduction, by Mackintosh's Labour constituency party chairman, claims authority by reciting historical reasons why that constituency party, and Mackintosh in particular, have a 'right' to publish on this issue: Mackintosh's long support for devolution; his authorship of *The Devolution of Power* (1968); that the constituency party seconded the pro-devolution motion of the 1974 Scottish Labour conference which led to the first conference card vote on devolution and the Local party's positive record against the SNP (1976, p.1). As previously noted, Dalyell (1976) invokes personal history, as well as party

identity, to claim authority on devolution. Trevor-Roper, introducing Dalyell (1977), also references Dalyell's credentials as a Scotsman, MP for fifteen years, Chairman of the Scottish Labour group of MPs 1974-5 and electoral victor over the SNP chairman; he opposes this to Labour and Conservatives who appease the "vocal minority" of separatists (1977, pp.ix-x).<sup>111</sup> Dalyell's personal history is used to claim foresight of the SNP threat. Similarly, Dalyell, responding to an STUC claim that devolution is the only way to defeat 'the clamour for separation', notes that "[t]his may have been true 10-15 years ago, when I first pleaded with party leaders and Willie Ross to take the SNP seriously. It is no longer true" (1976, p.1): presumably if Dalyell had been listened to the SNP would not now be a threat.

As Dalyell and JP Mackintosh use personal history, so party history, specifically in relation to the parties' Scottish credentials on constitutional matters, is often referenced. Thus, Lang and Henderson (1975) seek to associate the Conservatives with devolution as, they argue that, although Gladstone introduced the Bill creating the Scottish Secretary, Salisbury enacted it; Baldwin upgraded the Scottish Secretary to the Cabinet; Churchill declared the aim in 1949 of 'Scottish control of Scottish affairs' and set up the Balfour Royal Commission on the Constitution, which reported in 1954: thus Heath's 1968 declaration was "directly in accord with the diffusive traditions of Conservatism" (1975, p.9). Therefore, "[t]he conservative party's involvement in the process of devolution has not been piecemeal or pragmatic but wholly in accordance with one of the most durable

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<sup>111</sup> That the historian Trevor-Roper writes the introduction to Dalyell (1977) is presumably intended to lend Dalyell's arguments academic credibility.

principles of its philosophy, that of the diffusion of power...power shared is freedom spared” (1975, p.9). The Liberal pamphlet *Self Government* also references pro-home rule actions by the Liberal party, and contrasts “this Liberal solution...[which] millions of Scots supported in the Covenant of the 1950s” to “Tories and Socialists” who are “being forced to talk of more devolution” (in Hanham, 1969, p.190). ‘Edward Heath’s plan’, Home’s (1970) recommendation, would “just tinker with the problem and *still wouldn’t bring decision to Scotland*”, while the SNP “are prepared to see customs posts on the Cheviots”, against the wishes of Scots (in Hanham, 1969, p.190). The pamphlet explicitly seeks to show that the Liberals have historically ‘stood up for Scottish interests’, to link this with ‘self government’ and to historically associate the issue with the party while denigrating other parties as insincere or proposing insufficient and unpopular plans.

This location technique is also used in the ‘Labour Party in Scotland’ pamphlet to which Dalyell (1976) is a direct response. The use of the colloquial ‘Labour Party in Scotland’, rather than the technically correct Labour Party (Great Britain) Scottish Council, as the author of the pamphlet and that this occurs when it does, is significant. This is possibly a reaction to Sillars’s clever use of Labour’s colloquial name for his newly created party launched that year.<sup>112</sup> The pamphlet begins with an assertion by the STUC General Secretary that “it is certainly not true, as some assert, that devolution has become an issue for the Labour and Trade Union movement only since the appearance of the Scottish National Party” (1976a, p.1). The placement of this STUC statement at the beginning of

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<sup>112</sup> Lending credence to this, this formulation is used in another pamphlet published in the same year (Labour, 1976c).



the document emphasises the Scottish credentials and rhetorical location of the piece as a whole. Placing the STUC, a more consistent proponent of devolution than Labour, first combats a charge explicitly being addressed by this pamphlet: that Labour is opportunistic in supporting devolution.

The anti-devolution 'Scotland is British' campaign uses its opposition to constitutional reform to locate itself as representing Scottish opinion, noting that devolution was rejected by Scottish Labour "[a]s late as March 1974...on a card vote (demanded by Jim Sillars)" and that Labour was 'manoeuvred' into its commitment: "In our view the Scottish Council was the better judge of Trade Union and Labour party opinion. Enthusiasm for a legislative assembly is an SNP affair" (Scotland is British, 1977, p.1).<sup>113</sup> The campaign, addressing MPs who had recently defeated a House of Commons motion seeking to limit debate on devolution, asserts that "a vast majority of Scots welcome their efforts in saving Scotland and Britain from the monstrous fallacy" of the Scotland and Wales Bill (SIB, 1977, p.2). These arguments mirror those of Dalyell (1976; 1977).

There is, therefore, an implicit acknowledgement that the debate creates an association of 'Scottishness' and the constitutional debate. As Mackintosh asserts, "more attention to Scottish affairs...has come to be synonymous with a greater degree of self-government" (1976, p.3). All contributors, even opponents of reform, associate their constitutional position with an assertion of Scottishness. In this way, conversely, invocation of Scottishness becomes possible through rhetorical location in the evaluative debate on

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<sup>113</sup> The document is henceforth referenced as SIB (1977).

nationalism. Similarly, identity invocation within the confines of the debate is also achieved through asserting location in relation to other debate documents: for example JP Mackintosh (1968, p.167) refers to Steel (1970) presumably after seeing a pre-publication copy. Alternatively location is often achieved by referring to the debate as a whole. This has the effect of situating the intervention within the existing debate, accepting and reinforcing its parameters and tropes. This reinforces that these documents should be seen as interventions in a conscious ongoing debate and demonstrates to what extent the debate itself becomes partly constitutive of Scottish political discourse. Thus, texts continually note the prominence of, and need to address, constitutional issues.

This is not *merely* as a result of Hamilton, as the rise in the SNP and the constitutional question predates Hamilton. Sandy MacIntosh (1966) provides a good example of this and other implicit location techniques. This 1966 SNP reissued and augmented pamphlet, notes that it is responding to a perceived interest in 'self-government' at the time of its publication (MacIntosh, 1966, preface). A number of things are done in this apparently relatively unremarkable statement, as in other documents that claim to respond to the debate. By rhetorically positioning the pamphlet as responding to a public debate, the author makes his argument, and by implication its supporters, appear democratic and responsive.<sup>114</sup> The rhetorical positioning of the pamphlet in order to enforce responsiveness is reinforced by the structure of the pamphlet, which has a 'question and answer' form that also implicitly confers authority upon the author providing the answers.

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<sup>114</sup> Further, MacIntosh states that although he is an SNP member and the pamphlet has been reissued by the SNP, it expresses his own views rather than the SNP. Thus, to the extent that the pamphlet could be said to lead, rather than respond, to public demand, the SNP is even further distanced from such an accusation.

Ewing (1968) uses the same structure of question and answer to foreground identity, but for more clearly evaluative purpose. On her election in Hamilton, Ewing promised to be the most expensive MP in Westminster.<sup>115</sup> Ewing prints some of the questions she and other MPs asked along with government responses. This pamphlet invokes Scottish identity, but in ways that associate party and nation. Thus, the 'o' in 'Scotland' in the title is replaced with the SNP party logo; the title opposes *Scotland v. Whitehall*, associating Ewing's questions with Scotland; that these are *Parliamentary* questions is a reminder of recent SNP success. The question and answer structure reinforces the opposition positioning of the participants, reinforcing the main rhetorical division of the partisan debate, while a number of wry or sarcastic comments interposed by Ewing seek to reinforce scepticism that the government is looking out for, or interested in, Scotland.<sup>116</sup> The pamphlet illustrates the association of identity location, previously banal nationalism and the constitutional debate.

### §5. Conclusion.

The debate reinforces Scotland's institutional identity and associated institutional nationalism, the results of the '1707 myth' outlined in Chapter Two. However it also modifies this banal backdrop of Scottish politics. Rather than straightforwardly politicising Scottish identity, therefore, partisan dynamics lead to a foregrounding of nationalism

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<sup>115</sup> Ewing here was promising to ask as many Parliamentary Questions as possible and referring to the administrative cost of answering these.

<sup>116</sup> For example, asked if Scottish interests were borne in mind in the UK's EEC application, the minister's reply that there was 'full interdepartmental consultation which ensured that the interests of Scotland were borne in mind' is ridiculed as a "stock answer which means that Scottish interests were not considered" (1968, p.19).

within the partisan debate resulting from Hamilton and an evaluative debate on its meaning and ownership. As a result of this, the debate over nationalism and national identity becomes itself part of the ideological context of Scottish politics, and within which contributors locate themselves. Therefore the identity dynamics of the debate are more complex than either the rhetorical constructions employed within the debate, often for strategic partisan reasons, or accounts of the debate as a process *of* identity change, as outlined in Chapter Three. There is a debate over nationalism and national identity; and indeed identity contestation, including the 'decline of empire' thesis, is evident within the documents. However, no clear identity narrative is evident other than contestation that is heavily implicated in partisan debate. To account for the debate as a clear narrative of identity change suggests a prioritisation within the competing identity accounts evident, and a failure to recognise that identity change, to the extent that it did occur through the debate, was the contingent outcome of partisan debate rather than an explanatory factor.

**The Democratic Debate.**

**§1. Introduction.**

The explicit partisan debate and implicit evaluative debate on nationalism provide the context for debate over Scotland's constitutional position. While the economy would later come to take a central place within the debate, the focus initially is on this explicitly political debate, which is seen as the natural result of SNP success at Hamilton. Rather than being merely a debate between constitutional options, however, the documents reveal a concentration upon how Scotland is and should be governed. Kilbrandon notes that nearly all Scottish "complaints of substance" with UK government had to do with centralisation, normally from those involved in local politics; and lack of democracy, most notably from academics (1973a, p.86). This chapter supports this observation, although both concerns are evident and connected within the elite debate. While the explicit debate immediately sparked by Hamilton, therefore, was Scotland's constitutional position within the UK, an examination of the documents reveals concentration, rather, on the application of democratic principles. This is due to the dynamics of partisan debate and the nature of linguistic change. This chapter demonstrates that while the partisan debate reinforces rhetorical divisions, it also establishes some evaluative agreement on central democratic principles and critiques of contemporary governance. Nevertheless, the 'democratic

debate' cannot be seen as one of evolving agreement due to the continuing importance of the rhetorical divisions of the partisan debate.

## §2. An Evolutionary Debate over Democratic Principles.

The Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government (1967), a revised edition of The Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government (1961), addressing proposed constitutional reforms, includes a new chapter on devolution.<sup>117</sup> That this chapter is added demonstrates devolution's perceived increased importance within a short time. The Hansard Society judges devolution unfavourably, although it examines devolution purely as a potential solution to Parliamentary problems in Westminster. It argues that *existing* devolution is often unrecognised and outlines practical problems with further devolution.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, The Hansard Society examines extant arguments on devolution at the beginning of this period, including from different starting assumptions. While devolution was not the only constitutional option proffered, the arguments between constitutional options and over the form of Scotland's governance must be examined in interaction, and those The Hansard Society presents provide an entrée to this aspect of the debate.

Devolution, The Hansard Society notes, is often proffered on grounds of efficiency: to address Westminster 'legislative overload' and ministerial over-reliance on civil servants, to devolve responsibilities to experts or as a response to government over-centralisation

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<sup>117</sup> This text will henceforth be referenced as The Hansard Society (1967).

<sup>118</sup> The division of subject responsibilities and financial relations are seen as problematic. The problem of co-ordination, it is argued, would make relief of Parliamentary pressures insignificant.

and geographical remoteness. In relation to the latter argument, The Hansard Society singles out Laski's argument that devolution to Scotland, Wales and England would help foster "national sentiment" (1967, p.23), suggesting that devolution can create, encourage or maintain identity. Lastly, devolution is argued to increase democracy: in order that MPs do less and voters more because the essence of democracy is that "everyone should do a little politics and no one should do very much" (1967, p.30). Two 'schools' of devolution are identified (1967, p.30): 'functional devolution', to experts not geographically located, and 'regional devolution' (1967, p.36). In relation to the latter 'school', The Hansard Society recognises the distinctiveness of arguments for 'home rule' outside England which "seem to spring from grounds of national pride", rather than efficiency, though these are often linked (1967, p.36). Thus, devolution can recognise as well as foster identities. However, "[e]ach new proposed scheme of devolution has to face two questions - will it work and will it help?" (1967, p.40) and on the second question, The Hansard Society suggests this depends on the aim: if this is to meet "natural aspirations of the regions within 'Great Britain' then yes, if such exist - but regionalisation has its drawbacks, as *Passport to Pimlico* showed" (1967, p.41).<sup>119</sup> The Hansard Society thus outlines arguments focused on institutional efficiency, remote-government, participation and fostering or recognising identity. It also recognises these arguments are often conflated.

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<sup>119</sup> In this 1949 Ealing Studio comedy, starring Stanley Holloway and Margaret Rutherford, the people of Pimlico find treasure and a document declaring Pimlico to be part of Burgundy. The film charts the problems that arise when Pimlico declares independence from the rest of the UK, thereby escaping wartime rationing. The film ultimately highlights the patriotism and fellow feeling of the 'ordinary Brit', which triumphs over economic considerations as Pimlico eventually rejoins the UK.

The Hansard Society's arguments accurately reflect the central foci of debate. This is understandable for the same reasons Kidd provides for the post-Union survival of Scottish Whig historiography in its old form. Kidd argues that Scottish Whig historiography continued as a foil to the Jacobite alternative: "[h]istory was ideology, and in self-defence Scottish Whigs had to organise their arguments around the same questions [as their opponents]...Tit for tat was the iron law of debate" (1993, p.89). This is no less true in the constitutional debate. Thus, to the extent that the contemporary system is criticised, arguments in defence of the status quo centre on counteracting such criticisms, while Ewing (1968) illustrates the topics perceived by the SNP to be important. Although Ewing asserts that the SNP is "fighting for the survival of an ancient Nation" (1968, p.vi), the bulk of the pamphlet deals with other matters: an issue of contemporary concern ('the scandal of emigration'); the management of a traditional institution (education); the veracity of government; Scotland's economic condition ('fiddling Scotland's money'); and the current political system's failings in dealing with Scotland ('kept in chains'), where Ewing asserts 'London-based governments' are "principally concerned with the privileges and patronage of parliamentary power" (1968, p.v). SNP arguments mirror those of The Hansard Society, and SNP pamphlets emphasise democratic principles. Independence is proposed not to preserve an ancient national culture, but to release "the inventive energies of the people of Scotland in every field of human activity...from the dead and unimaginative hand of remote control" (SNP, 1974, p.1). This is partly for the reason outlined in Chapter Four: to combat partisan critiques. Nevertheless, the SNP thus emphasises the need for government "which maximises the open character...and the democratic accountability of public decision making" (1970, p.1), and McCormick argues



that the SNP aims “not only...to restore self-government to Scotland...[but also to] restore better government to Scotland, and more democratic government” (SNP Press release, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1979), opposing Westminster government and problems of inadequate efficiency and accountability. The central arguments of the SNP, as for devolutionists and defenders of the status quo, is not explicitly identity or even the constitutional position of Scotland, but *the application of democratic principles*.

That democratic principles have rhetorical purchase is unsurprising in a democratic society. JP Mackintosh, thus, argues that it is not complicated to outline how devolution would work; there are problems, “but the basic features...are easy to create and the problem is...political will” and those stressing difficulties “wish to cut the powers down and to produce a glorified county council” (1976, p.16).<sup>120</sup> Labour argues, indeed, that details are less important than effects: devolution’s success “will not...be judged...by abstract constitutional considerations but by the improvement it brings to the quality of our people’s lives” (Labour 1978, p.3). However, the details - how democratic principles should be applied - are the central focus of this aspect of the debate: as Johnston argues in relation to his preferred option, “it is not enough to say federalism works and is what most Scots want - it is necessary to say how” (Liberals, 1976, p.v).

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<sup>120</sup> In a contemporaneous contribution, Mackintosh asserts that, whatever those wanting to minimise the assembly wish, it will be called a Parliament and its leader the Scottish Prime Minister (rather than ‘Chief Executive’ as specified in HMG, 1975). Indeed, “if the assembly has any sense it will rig itself out with maces, Black Rods and the lot” (*NER*, 31, 1976, p.15). It is ironic that in 1997 PM Tony Blair was criticised for allegedly using the phrase ‘glorified county council’ as a description of his proposed Scottish Parliament. It is notable in the 1967-1979 period that maximalist devolutionists such as Mackintosh continually use the term Scottish *Parliament*, whereas opponents such as Dalyell, and less fervent devolutionists prefer Scottish *Assembly*.

Arguments within this aspect of the debate are often phrased negatively: as democratic critiques of the contemporary government system as much as positive advocacy of alternatives. In Skinnerian terms, an evolutionary focus is perhaps unavoidable, exemplifying Skinner's assertion that "[e]very revolutionary is...obliged to march backwards into battle" (1988d, p.112). The very act of proposing an alternative implies a critique of what exists or, as *The Scotsman* notes, "[e]very political movement is compounded out of dissatisfaction with the existing system and the belief that it can be remoulded in a more efficient and juster form" (1968, p.6). To *The Scotsman*, evaluatively re-described "Scottish nationalism has this twofold character. It is a protest against the failures of London government...It is also a genuine rebirth of patriotism" (1968, p.6).

Strategic partisan reasons can also be perceived in this common focus on democratic critiques of the contemporary system. For *opponents* of change, such a focus can be used to defend the current system while seeking to critique proposed alternative institutions or neutralise radical implications of reformist arguments. Unsurprisingly, defenders of the current structure, therefore, often seek to portray the current system as already addressing or capable of addressing perceived problems. Thus, according to Labour, the "position of the Scottish government within the present structure of the United Kingdom is unique" (Labour, 1970, p.2) with Scottish Ministers and civil servants involved at all levels of decision making. Improvements in "efficiency and democracy" can always be made; nevertheless, it is necessary to assess the "actual benefits" of current arrangements before looking at solutions to current "deficiencies" (Labour, 1970, p.2). This phrasing indicates a reformist route to solving perceived current problems, while ruling out radical change:

‘deficiencies’ imply features lacking in the current system that can be solved, rather than thoroughgoing constitutional change. Assessing ‘actual benefits’ is likely to favour present arrangements while emphasising the tangibility of these benefits as opposed to the implicitly speculative benefits of alternative systems.

For *proponents* of constitutional change, an oppositional argument, drawing attention to faults in the current system, unifies one’s audience. A critique of the existing system is one that all adherents to ‘self-government’ can accept, where a positive argument for any individual constitutional option would be divisive. Similarly, those arguing for change frequently emphasise continuity, which requires examination of current structures and an evolutionary argument. This is particularly so for those arguing for change short of independence. This can be seen in frequent statements that devolution is “firmly in line with the essential framework of the political and economic unity of the UK” (Labour, 1976a, p.2), and “part of a long and developing process begun after the Treaty of Union, 1707” (Labour, 1976a, p.3). HMG (1975) notes that “[e]ver since the voluntary union of Scotland and England in 1707, the arrangements for the government of Scotland have differed in some respects from those in England” (HMG, 1975, p.8), while recognising stability does not counteract that a “healthy democracy must develop and adapt itself to changing circumstances” (HMG, 1975, p.1). Evolution and consensual change is particularly important in constitutional matters “where frequent change would be harmful” (HMG, 1975, p.2). Throughout *Our Changing Democracy* there are assurances that devolution does not undermine the ‘essential political and economic’ unity of the United Kingdom. That devolution would undermine this had been the main basis of Labour’s

previous opposition to devolution, providing an additional strategic reason for such frequent statements. While there is a reversal of Labour's opposition to devolution this is done through continuing to emphasise the importance of UK unity, linked to critiques of SNP 'separatism'. Thus UK unity:

"is a powerful and constructive force shaping the lives of us all; and those who advocate destroying the United Kingdom for the sake of a real or imaginary short-term gain to some, brush aside the long term loss to all. The government reject entirely the idea of separation...and believe that the vast majority of Scottish and Welsh people endorse this rejection" (HMG, 1975, p.4).

Partisan uses of such evolutionary logic is underlined by JP Mackintosh's criticism of the SNP for their 'refusal' to use existing opportunities, as "insistence that government could and should do much more and an almost contemptuous dismissal of the present system, are the leading features of the nationalist movements" (1968, p.142). This is mirrored in Labour's attack on SNP "**SUBVERSION** because they are unwilling to work within the existing machinery of government. Even an assembly will be exploited for their own ends" (Labour, 1977a, p.1). This argument is also diffused, as Lang and Henderson argue that the SNP "do not stop to consider whether the grievance [on which they thrive] has anything to do with the way we are governed, or whether a change in our constitution would make the matter better or worse" (1975, p.18). Conversely, Heath asserts the flexibility of the UK's 'unwritten constitution' and the need to diffuse power while firmly rejecting 'separatism' (1998, p.27), and Home asserts that the UK system "has the virtue of simplicity and

adaptability and that any change...desired can be made within the existing framework” (1970, p.v) and must be consistent with current practice. Dalyell also asserts an evolutionary attitude: “the real answer to demands that the Scots should have a greater say in their affairs is to build on existing institutions rather than burden the country with an impractical and additional layer of government” (1977, p.5).

The resulting evolutionary logic can be seen to become constitutive of the democratic debate, leading to a (small-c) conservative debate over the extent of reform necessary to meet democratic standards. Thus, even JP Mackintosh, who criticises concentration on current structures and their problems (1968, p.142), contrasts his proposals with the contemporary structure: “Britain has become so centralised and so monolithic in governmental terms that there is tremendous reluctance to delegate tasks, or give other bodies a chance to act differently and quickly” (1968, pp.99-100); this is the “incredibly centralised character of British government and the distrust of local decision-making felt by the Whitehall/Westminster establishment (both parties)” (1976, p.10). Home, outlining his committee’s terms of reference as examining whether there is room “in a reformed system of government” for a devolved assembly (1970, p.v), explains that his committee took the opportunity of examining existing decentralisation, which is well documented but “[i]mperfectly understood” (1970, p.35) as, “without detailed knowledge of these matters it is impossible to come to an intelligent judgement as to whether there is room for additional political machinery and what function it would fulfil” (Home, 1970, p.v). Dalyell (1977) and Kilbrandon (1973a; 1973b) are similarly structured in an evolutionary manner. Dalyell outlines the status quo before addressing reform proposals, and the history of Scottish

nationalism; Kilbrandon outlines the evolution of the British state and nationalist movements within it. This fits the report's endorsement of a general principle that any reform should "reflect the people's history, traditions and social attitudes in such a way that it will readily be accepted as a natural development of what has gone before" (1973a, p.121); and that "[a]ny constitutional innovations should as far as possible be...grafted on to our existing institutions" (1973a, p.122).<sup>121</sup> The 'Scotland is British' campaign also notes insufficient knowledge of Scottish government (1977, p.2) and the need for increasing political education. This is not to say, they argue, that things should remain as they are but discussions on constitutional changes should start from a clear understanding of the existing position (1977, p.2). Willie Ross's assertion that "[b]efore an intelligent answer can be given...it is as well surely to know where we are; and how we got here" (1978, p.1) seems commonly accepted.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the democratic principles and critiques of the contemporary government system that emerge from the documents as central to the democratic aspect of the constitutional debate. The Hansard Society's division of arguments is utilised analytically to separate arguments, although it should be borne in mind that, as The Hansard Society notes, these are often conflated in use.

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<sup>121</sup> Kilbrandon's dissenting report, as well as emphasising an evolutionary attitude asserts more explicit conservatism: reforming 'proven abuses' in the tradition of Robert Peel and respecting tradition as entailed by Edmund Burke (1973b, p.50).

**§2. Remote Government: Centralisation, Bureaucracy and Accountability.**

Kilbrandon observes that its own establishment was due to discontent with government, “especially the frustrations of those living furthest from London” (1973a, p.3), and notes that the central concern in Scotland is centralisation and a feeling that Scotland’s equality within the Union is not adequately recognised. Indeed, that “[t]he present system is too centralised and does not work properly” (*The Scotsman*, 1968, p.2) can be characterised as the central contention of the debate to which all other arguments are related. All contributors recognise advantages in less remote, centralised government. Heath states the importance of decentralisation, as “political liberty is but the diffusion of power” (1998, p.27); Home admits to “a good deal of sympathy with Scotland’s aspiration [for devolution]...long distance correspondence is no substitute for personal contact and Whitehall was large and impersonal” (1976, p.103). Even opponents of reform recognise this argument’s force: “bringing people closer to the levers of power”, Dalyell notes, “is an excellent objective. But will an Edinburgh assembly achieve it? No, on the contrary it would take decisions further away...is education in Aberdeenshire really better run from Edinburgh than from Aberdeen?” (1977, p.5); JDB Mitchell, dissenting to Home (1970), disagrees with the proposed ‘Scottish Convention’ but recognises the necessity to “increase the immediacy of the relationship between citizen and government” and discontent resulting from a feeling that government is remote and over-complicated (Home, 1970, p.72). Nevertheless, the establishment of an assembly, he believes, is not the solution to essentially administrative, rather than legislative, problems (Home, 1970, p.72). Thus, the principle is not disputed, but the means are deficient. Similarly Milligan elliptically makes

the same point, cautioning that whilst a Scottish Parliament might seem more ‘touchable’, devolution could divide the Labour movement: ‘touchability’ is outweighed by a more important goal (Scottish Council, November 1967, p.63). Nevertheless, the force of argument Milligan recognises is not remoteness as such, but its effects. ‘Touchability’ could mean the ability of citizens to hold government to account, identification or participation. The critique that government is too remote is often linked to such factors. Indeed ‘remoteness’ must be related to particular problematic effects. This point is made implicitly by Labour: devolution “**will make government work better, work nearer, work under less pressure, it will allow more democratic accountability and more concrete legislation**” (1976a, p.5).

Steel (1970) outlines the main critique to which remoteness is associated, that of inadequate accountability, most succinctly. He asserts a lack of adequate accountability due to the Scottish Secretary being responsible for the functions that in England and Wales were the responsibility of nine functional ministries. Scottish Questions were held no more frequently than Question Times for other departments, and for the same length of time, during which Scottish Ministers had to answer questions on all these matters *and* on behalf of the Scottish Law Officers. This, Steel notes, leads to less intensive Parliamentary scrutiny of Scottish business and adds to legislative overload. The more power the Scottish Office receives, Steel argues, the less responsible it becomes, creating a democratic vacuum. This is what Ludovic Kennedy refers to as “ [t]he second class citizenship we all endure under a portmanteau secretary of state” (1968), linking criticism of the Scottish



Office (its territorial rather than functional nature) to broader issues of Scottish citizens' relations to government.

Criticisms of lack of accountability and 'legislative overload' are often associated with not only centralised but also technocratic politics and bureaucracy. Kilbrandon notes an increase in bureaucracy, and more government intervention, is partly responsible for heightened pressure for reform (1973a, p.76). JP Mackintosh similarly notes that as government increasingly does more, parliamentary scrutiny is less effective and "in practice many policy decisions, as well as the application of policies to difficult cases, are in the hands of Civil Servants", which is worse in Scotland with its distinctive institutions:

"...requiring the application of modified or special policies. These special needs give more scope to Scotland's Civil Servants because they can get on with the job of governing the country from Edinburgh while Scottish MPs are down in London with less time available for gathering evidence, pressing the minister and enforcing a degree of accountability" (1976, p.4).

Thus, "there is a democratic case for special machinery and this must mean a form of representative government which can exercise control over the Scottish Office" (Mackintosh, 1976, p.5). This accountability and bureaucracy critique is common. Ewing implicitly and explicitly critiques bureaucratic government. The term 'Whitehall' is often used as shorthand for government, and in Scotland as shorthand for England. Therefore, its deft use (as opposed to alternative synonyms such as 'Westminster' or 'London'), in

*Scotland vs. Whitehall* (1968), opposes Scotland to England *and* Whitehall bureaucracy. The use of the term emphasises the bureaucratic element of government, sharpening the contrast with the democratic claims made. This is not an isolated example. Thus, the SNP argues, no change leaves Scotland as an “under-privileged region of a *centralised and bureaucratic* United Kingdom” (1974, p.1; my italics); an SNP press release entitled *A Scottish Assembly: a step to open government*, reinforces the bureaucratic critique, asserting that Scotland in the UK is subject to “government by dinosaur in which the bureaucratic body has dwarfed the political brain”, inadequate accountability, “and in Scotland itself the absence of a political forum has smothered public debate. The powerful and efficient Scottish arm of the... [UK] Civil Service hastened quite naturally to fill this potential vacuum” (February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1974); Wolfe links bureaucracy and Labour, arguing that “the dominant elements of the Labour party cannot and will not abandon their sterile concept of a homogenous British society controlled by the centralised bureaucracy” (SNP Press release, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1975). The title of Wolfe’s talk, indeed, emphasises that devolution is not sufficient to overcome this problem: *‘Labour’s assembly: a ‘talking shop’ with not even all ‘Mr Ross’s powers as Secretary of State’* (SNP Press Release, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1975). Home similarly observes the problem of over-bureaucratic government. Noting the paradox that in an increasingly interdependent world “the smallest unit has insisted on asserting its personality and independence”, he asserts “[i]t is understandable in that superpowers are apt to dictate conditions of life, while bureaucracy in the technocratic age has become impersonal, inconsiderate and indiscriminating. But narrow nationalism is selfish, divisive and dangerous” (1976, p.205). Similarly, Brown and Harvie argue that:

“it would be surprising if a political structure as bureaucratic as ours did not provide demands for accountability and involvement. The rise of political nationalism has to be seen in this context. Only a small minority of the Scottish people have ever subscribed to the SNP’s policy of outright independence but may have voted for it out of sheer frustration at remote and secretive government” (1979, p.8).

Labour likewise acknowledges a perception that “Parliament was overworked, and...government accountability through Parliament to the electorate was often insufficient” (1969b, p.1). Devolution is rejected, but carefully, affirming past democratic faults but arguing that government is addressing these problems, and asserting the ambiguous wish for **“the greatest possible devolution consistent with...maximum possible influence”** (1969b, p.21). This is linked to partisan debate tropes: that regional policy requires central control “strengthens our rejection that Scotland should be economically or politically torn apart from the United Kingdom” (Labour, 1969b, p.21). Opponents of constitutional reform, therefore, also negatively evaluate bureaucracy but argue that devolution would make this worse or the current system is more accountable than often perceived. An emphasis on the bureaucratic implications of creating an additional tier of government and ‘over-government’, for example, is found in Dalyell (1976; 1977), and leaflets from the 1979 referendum campaign: “Assembly? More taxation, More Bureaucracy, More Government” (Scotland Says No); “Vote NO to bureaucracy, vote no to devolution” (Students Campaign Against a Devolved Assembly) (Bochel et al, 1979, pp.180-1).

Reminders of the extent of existing administrative devolution are also frequently made by opponents of constitutional reform. Labour outlines 'devolutionary' measures such as the establishment of the Scottish economic planning council, "one considerable step in devolution that has taken place...since 1964" (1970, p.9) that "has brought government much closer to the realities of social and economic life in Scotland" (Labour, 1970, p.10). Local government and Scottish Office reforms have increased 'local democracy' and made government more "open and accessible" (Labour, 1969b, p.1). Local government is "the most immediate opportunity for further devolution of power to Scotland" (1970, p.12). Indeed, the insufficiency of the current system to "meet modern needs" has contributed "considerably" to calls for devolution and so local government is "the most appropriate field in which to build greater public control over our environment" (1970, p.12). Labour associates itself with local accountability by noting that opposition to devolution does not contradict the fact that "as socialists we have traditionally fought to bring power to the people...every community should have the powers to control decisions which affect its life...Labour is the party of the local community" (1970, p.1). However, while 'democratic socialism' dictates that "those decisions which can best be taken in a local community should be based there" (Labour, 1970, p.1) it also believes in doing so within an 'international perspective'. There "is no paradox in this. No single geographical area can possibly be designed to best fit the needs of all the decisions which governments must take" (Labour, 1970, pp.1-2). This additionally reinforces an ideological division between 'democratic socialists' and SNP-nationalism, identified by contrast, as out of step with trends towards larger political units and 'reactionary' in relation to 'democratic socialism', the definition of 'progressive' to the authors. The critique is acknowledged but in a manner

that implies devolution is unnecessary through separating claims for decentralisation and democracy. Dalyell, similarly, argues that an 'Edinburgh assembly' will be no more responsive than Westminster and reprises the extent of administrative devolution, which should be recognised, although "accepting one's own shortcomings" is difficult as opposed to blaming the "faceless bigoted Englishman" (1977, p.6). Paton responds to such arguments by observing existing (remote) bureaucracy (1998, p.19), and JP Mackintosh responds by "[a]ccepting that while the important decisions are taken by Scots Civil Servants in Edinburgh, it does seem peculiar that the administration can be devolved but not the machinery of democratic control" (1968, p.12).

Labour, after its conversion to devolution, emphasises the argument from accountability. It favours devolution "both as the most effective way to tackle many of the problems faced by Scotland and to increase democratic control and participation by the people of Scotland" (Labour, 1976c, p.1). Devolution will provide **"the opportunity to restore democratic accountability over a government in Scotland, which by its very growth, has become increasingly unaccountable"** (Labour, 1978, p.2). JP Mackintosh puts the point most succinctly. Acknowledging that existing devolution is little understood, which he asserts the SNP often uses to its advantage, he argues that this is still insufficient: "[t]he grievance about 'remote government' is not racial or spatial. It arises despite the fact that decisions are not taken by Englishman in London. It arises because there is no democratic control in Scotland, no democratically elected body to which the regional civil service could be responsible" (1968, pp.132-3).

Thus the issues of remote government, bureaucracy and accountability are broadly recognised as issues, although this is crosscut by partisan dynamics. Even those who argue against devolution share a similar evaluative conception of these issues and the debate reinforces a, perhaps unsurprising, negative evaluation of over-bureaucratic, unaccountable and remote government.

### **§3. Responsiveness.**

JP Mackintosh highlights another aspect of this argument, arguing that, with legislative devolution “there would be a positive incentive to be different, to take local needs into consideration rather than struggle to be the same” (1968, pp.132-3). This refers to an aspect of accountability, responsiveness, which Paterson asserts is “at the core of the whole case for home rule” (1998a, p.2). This also emphasises the institutional focus of the debate: institutions should ensure responsiveness rather than that this should be demonstrated through particular policies.

Responsiveness is evidently of concern, as the amount of attention paid to Scotland, and the related issue of government’s knowledge of the governed, is frequently mentioned. Thus, Ludovic Kennedy asserts ‘neglect’ of Scotland, which would not be allowed in an English province, asking, “why should you care? Scotland is central to us but is peripheral to you” (1968); JP Mackintosh suggests that many Scots may vote SNP “as one method of ensuring more attention to Scottish affairs” (1976, p.3); Robertson implies ‘Scottish Patriotism’ may be a “necessary response to a London centred apparatus so overloaded

with other pre-occupations that Scottish issues are neglected” (Scottish Council, 1968, p.20); while the Liberals note that:

“WE KNOW WHY...[unresponsive government] HAPPENS,

Because Westminster has no time to discuss Scottish problems.

Because Scotland doesn’t get the different treatment that she needs.

Because London doesn’t care and isn’t interested in Scotland” (Hanham, 1969, p.190).

A concern with lack of responsiveness is repeatedly asserted. Thus, Taylor notes that government “is appearing to become more remote from and less responsive to public opinion” (Scottish Council, 1968, p.4) and that “losing touch” is one of the greatest dangers for politicians (*Q*, April 1976, p.4); the SNP notes concern “in every country” with the gap between government and governed (1974, p.3); Dewar, asserting that independence in the modern world “is a myth”, and even federalism would fragment UK unity, notes that “the electorate, used to thinking in Scottish terms, wants to feel that government is more immediately involved in their problems” (MacCormick, 1970, pp.66-7); while JP Mackintosh states that it “is a short step from a feeling of government as remote, to the belief it is administered by Englishmen in London” (1968, p.162). Thus:

“While there is no unifying theme to SNP propaganda, there is a pride in a general feeling of ‘being Scottish’, and a resentment at ignorance or condescension from the southerner...The SNP have managed to catch a vague feeling that...government is remote and unconcerned...all of which can be combined in the proposition that the existing system of government is unsatisfactory” (1968, pp.162-163).

To Mackintosh, devolution is necessary to respond to this discontent. Home similarly asserts that the SNP’s “platform was discontent with the lack of understanding of Scottish problems shown by Whitehall and a desire for matters which were demonstrably Scotland’s affairs to be processed in Edinburgh”, and the rise of the SNP is because “all political parties had funk’d the issue for so long” (1976, p.102). Home emphasises that responsiveness should be a concern in examining Scottish government, as “[a] valid Scottish point of view may fail to make an impact on Parliament in time...Parliament has not always appreciated peculiarly Scottish requirements or particular aspects of Scottish law” (1970, p.60).

Not only would reformed institutions increase responsiveness but also current structures are perceived to actively block this. Thus, *The Scotsman* asserts that policies in the UK are not suitable for both prosperous and less fortunate areas of the UK (1968, p.2) and so the issue is not one of policy but institutions. Regional policies have had some effects, but these are “palliatives, where radical change is required” (1968, p.2), including the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. JP Mackintosh similarly suggests political options are limited by the current system. Thus, Scottish Civil Servants, although “honourable,



patriotic men doing their best” (1976, p.5), know they mustn’t embarrass their ministers. Therefore, policies will only be proffered if they are applicable to England or will not lead to “invidious comparisons” (1976, p.5). The implication is clearly that there will be more room for distinctive policy with devolution. McCrone asserts devolution would allow recognition of “all the respects in which circumstances are different there and to what extent distinctive remedies should be applied” (1969, p.89). Similarly, to the Liberals the “point of devolution is that we in Scotland believe that government which is nearer to the people and the problems is more likely to be good government” (1976, p.19), asserting both a collective Scottish view, the Liberals as representing this, and the importance of government knowledge of the governed.

Labour’s Kilbrandon evidence, recognising the force of this argument, dismisses an assembly as superficially attractive but divisive. It implies, indeed, that the constitutional debate *is* an example of responsiveness, reinforcing the critique while arguing that it is being addressed. The “vital public debate” (1970, p.7) exemplified by Kilbrandon represents “a new and welcome enlightenment of the power of ordinary people to control events” (1970, p.8). While this occasionally means demonstrations, “far more often it simple means that people simply do not believe - until they *see* the evidence - the claims of government to have advanced their cause” (Labour, 1970, p.8). There is a gap between belief and achievement evident in Scotland and “[t]hus a desire for change may rest upon inadequate information and appreciation” (Labour, 1970, p.8). Reinforcing a reformist approach, Labour argues that the two Royal Commissions, Kilbrandon and Wheatley, have increased interest in the “reform of local democratic structures” (1970, p.8). Labour’s

opposition to devolution is due “partly from our view of its divisive nature” and partly as the people of Scotland are served “better than they think” by current arrangements (1970, p.16). Nevertheless, any measures of ‘self-government’ which would bring “real benefits” to Scotland are welcomed and Labour’s 1958 Conference motion is reaffirmed (Labour, 1970, p.16), favouring maximum devolution consistent with UK unity. After Labour’s change of policy, HMG (1975), similarly, sees itself to be responding to “extensive public consultation on a consultative document” and will “clearly meet the aspirations of the majority of the Scots and the Welsh” (HMG, 1975, p.1). Devolution is about “recognising a mood and a demand” (HMG, 1975, p.4) that should be recognised in democracies. Since 1707 Scottish government within the UK has been to some extent distinctive, but increased burdens mean the present system “cannot always be responsive enough to distinctively Scottish problems and characteristics” (HMG, 1975, p.8): devolution will address this.

Not only Labour uses this tactic of portraying its position as responding to public demand. Sandy MacIntosh (1966) does the same, as noted in Chapter Four, while Reid asserts that “if the Scottish people don’t want to go the whole way [to independence] that’s fine with me” (*Q*, February 1976, p.5). This tactic of portraying proposals as a response also addresses the critique of ‘opportunism’, a charge frequently made on all sides.<sup>122</sup> Clearly, this critique implies that ‘responsiveness’ should be more than merely electoral reaction. Thus, a cartoon on the front of *Q* (November, 1975) shows a sign stating ‘I’ve always been a devolutionist’, behind a caricature of Willie Ross, obviously drunk, saying ‘I’ve always

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<sup>122</sup> Indeed, even arch anti-devolutionist Dalyell’s consistency is questioned (although after our period) by Sillars, who notes “Dalyell, yes, that Tam Dalyell” (1986, p.49), as chairman of the Scottish Labour group of MPs 1974-5, was willing to consider supporting devolution.

been a tee-totaler'. Electoral opportunism is contrasted with principle. *Q* (February 1976) makes a similar point with a cover cartoon of Harold Wilson, Margaret Thatcher and Harry Ewing rowing a 'Devolution' boat, with a shark approaching from beneath: the editorial makes clear that "the basic problem about devolution for the present government is that it doesn't really believe in it" but is caught between nationalists and devolutionists - the concern of the government is with "sinking the separatists" (*Q*, February, 1976, p.3).

Labour's *Why Devolution? The Whole of the Labour Movement in Scotland is giving overwhelming support to the Government's Bill for a Scottish Assembly* (1976a), addresses this criticism explicitly, as is evident in its title, and implicitly. In its attempt to demonstrate the 'overwhelming' support of the title, this pamphlet contains statements by the General Secretary of the STUC, Scottish Labour's General Secretary, the Labour Scottish National Executive Committee Chairman and a number of Unions, all reinforcing the same points - for devolution and opposed to SNP 'separatism'. As previously noted, the pamphlet begins with an STUC statement (ahead of even Labour, the nominal 'author') to both implicitly, as well as explicitly deny opportunism (1976a, p.1).<sup>123</sup> The STUC are "totally opposed to separation and advocate the establishment of a Scottish Assembly with meaningful powers" (1976a, p.1). These tropes and the unity of Labour movement support are stated by each contribution: "the Labour movement in Scotland, while speaking with one voice for the vast majority of Scots in demanding a strong Scottish assembly, has also given its pledge to resist any and every effort of the separatists, in whatever guise, to destroy the unity of the UK" (1976, p.2). According to the STUC, "[t]he status quo is no

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<sup>123</sup> See Chapter Four, pp.220-221.

longer an option”, as recent elections show that Scots “wish a change, they wish devolution. Equally clearly they reject separation” (1976a, p.1). Nevertheless, there is an implicit acknowledgement that the SNP is at least one important motivator: “Workable devolution is in the view of the Scottish TUC the only way to silence the clamour for separation” (1976a, p.1). To Labour, this is a sign that “it is time for our party, the real and unquestionable party of the people” to examine these feelings of dissatisfaction and create new institutions “which will improve and consolidate the integrity of the UK” (1976a, p.4). The TGWU goes further, invoking the critique of SNP emotionalism: “[s]eparatism is not a course...sane, sensible Scots should be prepared to follow. Separatism would not only tear apart the UK - it would have Scots themselves tragically split” (1976a, p.7). Devolution will “recognise the differences that exist with the UK”, while preserving the “essential unity that has for long bound friendly nations” (1976a, p.7): the charge of opportunism is related to critiques of responsiveness; responsiveness to, and knowledgeable about, Scots’ wants is emphasised in reply.

Claiming knowledge of Scots’ wants is not unusual, although contributors’ interpretations of the Scots’ desires differ, as is demonstrated by Dalyell’s exasperation at Sillars, who he recognises is “tremendously eloquent and has a beautiful rich voice and a handsome youthful presence – but I do get a bit irritated the way he supposes that only he...can interpret the aspirations of the Scottish people” (1977, p.105). To Dalyell, calls for devolution to increase responsiveness are trumped by the need to maintain UK unity. Given his characterisation of the debate this is unsurprising. However, Dalyell also denies there is enough purely Scottish legislation to require a full time assembly, implying the

present system *can* be sufficiently responsive and asserting that many examples of delayed legislation reflect divisions amongst parties and within Scotland (1976, p.7). Dalyell's concerns about the institutional dynamics of the establishment of an assembly also have a responsiveness aspect, shared by 'Scotland is British': that rather than responding to demands, devolution would create dynamics against Scots' wishes. Indeed, it is asserted these dynamics would be against even the wishes of those arguing for reform, as they did not understand the full implications of devolution (Dalyell, 1977, p.1). Similarly, a dissent to Home (1970) argues against legislative devolution as Scotland has not one but many opinions (referencing JP Mackintosh, 1968, in support). Legislative devolution, it argues, is "likely to impair the efficient political unity of Great Britain" (Home, 1970, p.70), while a Parliament without powers will seek them (Home, 1970, p.69). At its base, this claim rests on the assertion that "the basic aspiration of the majority of the Scottish people is to remain British and not dismantle the United Kingdom" (Dalyell, 1976, p.5) and devolution, the first step on the 'slippery slope to independence', endangers this.

JP Mackintosh, seeking to rebut such "inventive alarmism" (1976, p.2), tacitly acknowledges the force of such arguments by admitting that this is necessary to prevent government 'backtracking': to disappoint high expectations which have been raised, he argues, would miss "a unique historical opportunity to remove the dissatisfaction with the system of government in Scotland" and would encourage the SNP (1976, p.2). He notes (as do Brown & Harvie, 1979, p.10) that the 'slippery slope' argument assumes no stable constitutional option between the status quo and independence, and that:

“any devolution is in reality a concession to nationalist pressure...the explanation of any failure will be that the degree of devolution is insufficient. The only conclusion will be that more self-government [is necessary]...the process accelerating till total separation” (1976, p.8)

In contrast to this denial of any median point between Union and independence, Mackintosh notes that the “desire to know how, why and by whom local decisions are made and...to participate in such decision making has arisen throughout the advanced nations” (1976, p.11). Decentralised countries have been able to satisfy this desire and rather than tensions increasing, satisfied people become more pragmatic: “once a general degree of decentralisation has been conceded, the virtues of remaining part of the larger unit become much clearer” (Mackintosh, 1976, p.13). Thus, “once...free to determine those issues that are purely Scottish...[Scots] can...freely express the British side of their dual nationality through Westminster” (1976, p.13). Elliptically referencing tropes of the evaluative debate on nationalism, Mackintosh references Ireland as a contrasting example. Similarly, McCrone argues “[t]o grant responsibility has the effect of making people see where their true interest lies; to withhold it in the face of a strong moderate demand is to play into the hands of the extremists” (1969, p.99).

#### §4. Participation and Identification.

Claims that increased opportunities for participation are demanded, and about the lack of such opportunities under the status quo, are frequently voiced within debate documents. Brown and Harvie argue that although current government accountability to Parliament is bad, that to the people is worse, and “the will to make...[devolution] work exists as the mass of the Scottish people have indicated time and again that they want not separatism, but *the greater degree of democratic involvement* in Scottish life that the Assembly will permit” (1979, p.2; my italics). Taylor asserts that the assumption of a demand for more participation by ‘the man on the street’ is widespread (*Q*, April 1976, p.4); to Mackintosh only legislative not administrative devolution could meet “*this desire for greater involvement and local control*” (1968, p.163; my italics). Kilbrandon recognises this perceived demand and investigates whether this exists and what it means as part of its interpretation of its own terms of reference (1973a, p.6). Dalyell argues, in contrast, that this apparent demand is illusory: “Devolution will not be the result of any great ground swell of public opinion, but of a concerted campaign by a small percentage of the population who have a vested interest” (1976, p.6). Brown and Harvie argue that this is ‘condescending’: devolution will always be trumped by issues such as unemployment, “but it is as much discussed as any constitutional issue is likely to be and certainly more than most of the content of party manifestos” (1979, p.11). Nevertheless, Dalyell asserts that “in spite of all the ballyhoo, devolution is far less widely supported in Scotland than its supporters would like to believe” (1977, p.177), although “for the media...lawyers and the prospective Assembly politicians an assembly is not a means to an end of better

government. It is the end itself” (1976, p.6).<sup>124</sup> Further, he suggests that pro-devolution sentiment within the Labour party is not the majority view, referring to “[t]hose Trade Union leaders and members of the NEC who foisted an Assembly on the Scottish Labour Party” (1976, p.3), and “pro-assembly members [of Labour] like Jim Sillars who gave the impression that Devolution was more thought out than it was” (1977, p.7).

Even without accepting Dalyell’s argument, there is reason to question whether there was an actual demand for participation or whether the debate reflects the demands that contributors think *should* be made. Indeed, a number of contributions throw doubt on how much demand for participation there is. Dewar notes much talk of participation, but argues that “to involve people in the process of decision-making would demand commitment to politics few would wish to make”, and rather a more responsive system is the aim (McCormick, 1970, p.67); Q argues that the assembly itself would stimulate political education for which there is a great need (November 1975, p.7). ‘Scotland is British’ calls for an education campaign to overcome the degree of contemporary ignorance about the current state of devolution to Scotland, suggesting public disengagement with politics and implicitly agreeing the need for a closer connection between citizen and government, but differing over the timetable for the remedy of that concern, as proponents of reform partly argue for constitutional change as a way of remedying this perceived disconnection. ‘Scotland is British’, therefore, sees the need to remedy the disconnection before asking the Scottish people to decide on their form of government. Of course, this is likely a

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<sup>124</sup> Magnusson similarly notes that the press sees devolution as “good copy” and this plays a part in its support (*The Scotsman*, 30/10/1967).



strategic claim aimed to de-motivate devolutionists by delaying devolution. However, that the claim is made suggests that, even if not sincere, it is believed to have purchase. *The Scotsman* calls for a great debate on the constitutional issue because it affects all aspects of Scottish life but political *apathy* is noted. Despite this, “politics are more important than they have ever been, in fact too important to leave to the politicians” (1968, p.5), and so it is necessary to ensure political decisions are taken by “the right people in the right place, that is by those with intimate knowledge of the problems and near enough to understand the reactions of those concerned” (1968, p.5).

The suggestion that constitutional reform would itself create more participatory government is common. STUC General Secretary James Milne argues that one of the reasons for STUC support of devolution is that it will “ensure a much greater degree of participation in government by all sectors of the community” (Labour, 1976, p.1). Labour, seeking to justify their change of policy in a way compatible with earlier arguments on the ideological reasons for opposing devolution, describes the party’s position in relation to two basic principles: socialism or reducing inequality, and democracy or accountability to the people **“in their communities and workplaces. Furthermore, the power developed must be real so that people play a significant and growing part in shaping their own lives”** (Labour, 1978, p.1). In the past, Labour admits, the balance between these principles has “perhaps overemphasised control at the expense of participation...the creation of an assembly is an opportunity...to restore to people a major say in the decisions that affect their lives” (1978, p.1). A Scottish Assembly will not only create accountability but “a participatory democracy” (1978, p.4). Under this title the pamphlet argues, indeed, that it is

necessary to devolve power beyond Edinburgh (1978, p.4). Further, the party will seek governmental methods where proposals are “shaped at every stage by all those who can contribute collectively” (1978, p.5).

The SNP similarly asserts that to “secure the framework for a just, open and democratic system of government” requires, as well as a constitutional framework, a commitment to “restoring real power to the elected representatives of the people in parliament, to decentralising the exercise of power within Scotland itself, and to giving every person and community in Scotland the opportunity to influence at all levels” (SNP Press release, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1979). Home, recognising the importance of participation, asserts that his convention can stimulate this: “[p]ublic discourse of policy is desirable at a variety of local levels, as well as in parliament” (1970, p.60). Obviously, Home says, Scots do not know enough about how Scottish government is conducted and, while publicity might remedy this, “an increased involvement in the processes of decision making would do more” (1970, p.60); therefore, “[s]uch a body would go a long way towards creating an informed public opinion” as well as giving Scottish ministers the “benefit of local experience, knowledge and opinion” (1970, p.61). Home seeks to “combine administrative efficiency with a greater participation by the Scottish people in matters of concern to Scotland” (1970, p.59). This is, of course, open to the objection of being a ‘talking shop’, but:

“talk is in fact a very large part of Parliament’s activities. Indeed ‘parlying’ was the origin of Parliament. The right to discuss should in no way be disparaged particularly when it can contribute to the spread of knowledge and understanding” (Home, 1970, p.61).

The argument that more involvement in politics would lead to more understanding of public affairs implies a developmental view of citizenship. This is evident in *The Scotsman*’s call for participation, which is linked to the value of exercising democratic control: although the establishment of an assembly will not signify any new resources, “[t]here is a value in doing the job oneself, in having the arguments and in allowing local pressure groups to hear their case being put and answered” (1968, p.163). It is further suggested that economic success would be easier after constitutional reform. The SNP also implies such a developmental view: independence will see a “release of the inventive energies of the people of Scotland” (1974, p.1). The pamphlet, further, mentions the possibility of instituting participatory mechanisms such as referenda, as people are “demanding” more than “merely voting” (1974, p.3). Indeed, participation is asserted as part of “the Scottish tradition” (1974, p.14). Dalyell once again disagrees, dismissing Milne’s view that with a Scottish Assembly “in Scotland a much more meaningful use of resources could be made” even without revenue raising powers (1977, p.1). However, JP Mackintosh argues devolution would have positive policy effects, giving “a focus or rallying point for all those involved in Scottish affairs” (1976, p.5).

There appears to be an implicit assertion of the desirability of participation and a developmental view of citizenship. This is, further, linked to improving government's knowledge of the governed and creating, reinforcing or improving *identification* between the two. All are evident, and evidently linked, for example, in Lindsay's assertion that:

“[i]f you believe that people should be participants rather than voyeurs...then you will favour trying to keep as much decision making as possible close to those whom it will most effect. But...[also] political units should where possible reflect community identification and this may be determined by historical experience, by cultural differences, by differing interests. It is remarkable that the feeling of being Scottish should have remained. We ought to have become North British, but being awkward and unreasonable, we didn't. For the people who live in Scotland, Scotland is a meaningful aggregate and we want to achieve a political expression of this national identity. We are even bold enough to think that we might make not such a bad job of it as our present masters...the thinking which leads to self government is likely to be the thinking which leads to a vigorous local and independent democracy” (Kennedy, 1970, p26).

JP Mackintosh also links participation and the identification of government and governed, the location and form of government and the extent of citizen participation. He argues that discussions on local government are often conducted around existing structures and powers of local government, which ignores the fact that local government can make a significant difference and “create a persona” (1968, p.9). Common Scots' indignation at Scotland

being called a region does not deny differences of kind, only that Scots are currently “administered by departments which have responsibilities for an area, or a region, rather than for a particular subject or service as is the pattern in the UK” (1968, p.71). In response to the argument that large regional authorities are artificial and lack any sense of loyalty: “[n]o one can now deny that great enthusiasm is aroused by self-government for Scotland” (1968, p.92). Indeed, Mackintosh notes this is one reason some politicians are wary of devolution (1968, p.92). That Scotland should *not* get an assembly because of national loyalties is rejected. Mackintosh argues exactly the opposite: while many nationalist arguments are false, dissatisfaction:

“is sufficient reason in itself for a change...It is possible for individuals to disagree with the views of large sections of the electorate, but it is dangerous and undemocratic to refuse either to respect those views or to attempt to meet them if they persist” (1968, p.166).

Similarly, in 1976, Mackintosh argues that the argument for local control:

“may be a good argument for regional authorities in England...[but] when there are lingering aspects of national consciousness and other common institutions which furnish the Scots with a sense of identity, then an extra twist is given to the widespread desire for effective local control of decisions which effect the quality of peoples’ lives” (1976, p.11)

Mackintosh observes that many of his Labour colleagues recognise the need for decentralisation but not to national units, fearing that this would “whet the appetite” for more (1968, p.164). However, referencing tropes within the evaluative debate, Mackintosh asserts that on examination, “the character of the feeling that Scotland as a unit has claims for a measure of internal self-government...[is] not nationalist in the separatist sense at all” (1976, p.12). He notes that most of the Scots electorate want more political power devolved, “and not only are the SNP a minority in this group, but a minority of SNP voters actually want their parties full policy of independence” (1976, p.12). This is due to the strength of dual nationality. Wanting “more control in Scotland over Scottish affairs is not necessarily or even usually anti-English”, nor need it involve any of the nastier characteristics of “the aggressive and exclusive nationalists that have done so much damage in recent history. This was well revealed by the way the SNP found that the selfish and materialist ‘it’s Scotland’s oil’ campaign was not a winner” (Mackintosh, 1976, p.12). Therefore, implementing devolution:

“is to meet the expressed desires of a large majority of Scottish voters and there are the sentiments in existence to back up or give strength to such a policy. But these sentiments exist together with a desire by the bulk of the electorate to remain British; they do not conceal a rabid and exclusive separatism nor are they a half-way house towards such opinions” (Mackintosh, 1976, p.13).

Mackintosh rejects alternative proposals, noting Steel's dismissal of the idea of a travelling Scottish Grand Committee;<sup>125</sup> the Conservative 'variant' "declared under the somewhat high-flown title of 'the declaration of Perth'" (1968, p.169) and problems with all past schemes of federalism.<sup>126</sup> The best way to meet contemporary demands is to establish regional councils for nine English regions, as well as for Scotland and Wales: if the case for a 'larger and more effective' body than regional councils is accepted, then in Scotland, "that something has to be a Scottish assembly or Parliament" (1976, p.12).

### **§5. What is the Debate about? Rhetoric and Responsibility.**

Key democratic concepts form the centre of the explicit focus on Scotland's constitutional position. While it is unsurprising that there is an agreement of democratic values in a democratic society, the rhetorical dynamics of the debate also develop a measure of underlying evaluative agreement on the critiques of the status quo around which this aspect of the debate centres. Thus, accountability, responsiveness, participation and identification of government and governed are positively evaluated and, unsurprisingly perhaps, bureaucracy and centralisation negatively evaluated. However, there is partisan disagreement on the implications of these evaluations, and indeed the debate over these is inflected with strategic use of language. Indeed, this is evident in contributor's characterisations of this aspect of the debate. As the last chapter demonstrated, nationalism

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<sup>125</sup> Steel dismisses this idea as "neither Scottish, nor grand, nor a committee" (1970, p.10) as party balance on the committee in line with the composition of the House of Commons is achieved by the addition of non-Scottish MPs; the Committee meets rarely and considers non-controversial bills at the second reading legislative stage.

<sup>126</sup> These are similar to those noted by The Hansard Society in regard to devolution (1967): see p.226, fn.118. Similar problems are outlined in Home (1970) and Kilbrandon (1973a; 1973b) in regard to federalism.

is a malleable term, its meaning and ownership forming the centre of an evaluative debate derived from partisan interaction. Similarly, debate contributors strategically construct the democratic debate using ambiguous terminology: thus ‘home rule’ and ‘self-government’ are often used as synonyms for the debate’s subject. Depending on the author these conflate specific constitutional options. *The Scotsman* (1968), proposing federalism, states that it will “put the case for self-government and suggest how it could be put into effect...home rule all round is a recipe for a happy, prosperous and united Britain” (1968; p3); Labour, arguing *against* reform, claims to be the party of local communities “and their struggles to build a cogent structure of self-government in which every citizen should play his part” (Labour; 1970, p.1); while the SNP (1974) argues that ‘independence’ will change Scotland from a ‘province’ to a “self governing community” (1974, p.1); Sandy MacIntosh sees himself responding to a public interest in ‘self-government’ (1966, p.3). The term is thus undefined but used to describe alternative positions.

Steel, discussing “arguments for Scottish self-government” (1970, p.3), illustrates the strategic value of such terms. The un-emphasised introduction of self-government as his subject assumes its meaning is self-evident. The value of this is the effect on the audience. Where ‘devolution’, ‘federalism’ and ‘independence’ refer to distinct policies that divide the audience, ‘self-government’ appeals to supporters of all these options (as does ‘home rule’). Further, the term self-government is positively evaluated, evoking the same positive connotations as ‘independence’: self-reliance, self-determination, maturity and responsibility, while lacking attachment to a partisan and, therefore, divisive political program. Such positive evaluations are reinforced by frequent positive uses in divergent



sources. The use of such terms seeks to increase the positive reception of the proposal being proffered. Thus, Steel seeks to overcome the mutual animosity of federalists, devolutionists and those in favour of independence by using self-government, despite and *because* different sections of the audience will interpret it differently. Indeed, the use of this rhetorical device is not limited to proponents of change, being evident in Dalyell (1976; 1977): although the conflation of nationalism and devolution is consistent with Dalyell's characterisation of the debate, it also allows him to simultaneously critique nationalism and devolution and seek to unify the SNP's opponents against devolution as well as independence. Therefore, such terms, while in frequent use, say little about the dynamics of the debate without further investigation of their application. This requires concentration on the democratic principles, as this chapter has outlined.

Steel, however, also references *responsibility* as a desirable feature of any democracy and strategically highlights this concept: most "arguments for self-government" are based on the economy, history or culture, "all important, but equally important in my view is a recognition that Scotland suffers from a non-responsible form of government...accentuated by the growing power of government since the war" (1970, p.3). His call for "those interested in the maintenance of responsible democracy in every country [to] re-examine the case for a Scottish parliament" (1970, p.3), recognises a divided audience and utilises ambiguous terminology to unite them, introducing responsibility as equally important to other arguments and one that all can accept. That varied contributors reference responsibility frequently requires some comment.

Home, noting his committee's purpose to examine possibilities of "devolution of greater responsibilities to Scotland" (1970, p.v), straightforwardly refers to governmental powers. Other uses associate responsibility and accountability: Dalyell (1976; 1977), 'Scotland Is British' (1977) and the Conservatives (arguing against the government's devolution legislation) agree that an assembly without tax-raising powers would be "financially irresponsible because it would have responsibility for spending money that it did not have to raise" (Conservative Research Department, 1978, p.15). In response to such arguments, Brown and Harvie argue that the assembly "isn't about spending more money, but about spending it responsibly" (1979, p.11), asserting that the "demand for responsible government" has existed since the Scottish Office's creation (1979, p.8). This associates responsibility and the *exercise* of government responsibilities. Both aspects are found in Steel. Criticising Westminster arrangements for Scottish business, in addition to a lack of accountability Steel asserts that the more power the Scottish Office receives, the less "responsible" it becomes, creating a democratic vacuum and a department "remarkably out of touch with the feelings of the people whom it exists to serve" (Steel, 1970, p.7). The Scottish Office is the department with the "least outside control and responsibility" (Steel, 1970, p.7). Conversely, Maxwell predicts the consequences of an assembly would be to create an "open, democratic and responsible system of government" (SNP Press release, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1979). These associate responsibility with responsiveness as well as accountability. McCrone notes "[d]issatisfaction with the present system arises...[most importantly as] the Scottish executive is in no direct way electorally responsible to Scotland" (1969, p.86). Existing devolution is not sufficient as, while "the Secretary of State is always a Scots MP his prime responsibility is not to the Scottish people...but to the

British Prime Minister” (1969, p.87). However, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, as territorial ministers, have specific relationships with their areas. This may be efficient, but “efficient administration is not sufficient; the framework in which it is carried out is also important. Because the executive in Scotland is not directly responsible to the people it governs, they feel alienated from it” (McCrone, 1969, p.88). People are not involved in Scottish administration, which “is unhealthy; it generates a helplessness about the country’s problems and a propensity to blame them on others” (1969, p.88). Responsibility is thus associated with critiques of participation and identification.

Responsibility is therefore utilised by various contributors, no doubt partly for strategic reasons, in ways that reference critiques of accountability, responsiveness, participation and identification between government and governed outlined above. It would be misleading to suggest that this means that there is one concept of responsibility uniting all contributors and critiques. However, this thesis emphasises the effects of discursive interaction, and so frequent use of such a term by diverse sources must be recognised. Indeed a tentative claim can be made that responsibility potentially represents more than just a term to unite an audience rhetorically. Responsibility is associated with the positive alternative to the critiques outlined. Responsible government is, therefore, accountable, responsive, and participatory and involves identification of government and governed. Further, and again tentatively, responsibility can be associated with an *attitude*, which incorporates these positively evaluated concepts, and should be adopted by government and governed. Thus to Steel (1970), that the Scottish Office becomes less responsible as it gains power *can* reference accountability, or that power is exercised ‘irresponsibly’; to the

SNP, the choices for Scotland are no change or to “take responsibility for the government of our own affairs...born of confidence in ourselves” (1974, p.1), giving “a new sense of responsibility” (1974, p.1); McCormick predicts independence would “restore to Scots people a sense of responsibility...the opportunity for a real release of energy...It might even bring the Scots to solve their own problems rather than blame them on the English” (1970, p.53).

Home seems to refer to a particular constructive attitude in dismissing criticisms that his convention will create Scottish/English tensions if these nations elect different governments: “it is reasonable to assume that Scotsmen are responsible citizens” (Home, 1970, p.65). Home refers to the attributes necessary to be held by Scots if his ‘convention’ were established. Recognising possibilities of clashes between institutions with different political majorities, he states that “[o]ur proposal does involve an act of faith in the common sense, objectivity and tolerance of the Scottish people” (1970, p.vi). In his autobiography Home comments that this is “true of any system” (1976, p.211). *The Scotsman*, though it does not appeal to the concept by name, makes a similar point: although there are a number of problems with implementing federalism, these are ‘often exaggerated’ and “given goodwill these problems, mainly technical, could be solved” (1968, p.3); discussing the proposed oversight of the Assembly by the Scottish Secretary, and ultimately Parliament, HMG (1975) notes that if devolution works, these reserve powers will be rarely used and need not represent conflict. Thus, “[t]he future of us all turns to a great extent upon harmonious cooperation between all the people of the United Kingdom” (HMG, 1975, p.7).

Responsibility might be conceptualised as an attitude of civic virtue. The ‘civic tradition’ with which the notion of civic virtue is traditionally associated, “denotes a style of thought...in which it is contended that the development of the individual towards self-fulfilment is only possible when the individual acts as a citizen, that is as a conscious and autonomous participant in an autonomous decision-taking political community, the polis or republic” (Pocock 1971, p.85). Conceptions of civic virtue emphasise the positive effects for both citizen and society of active citizen participation in public affairs and the identification of state and citizen. This also coheres with the suggestion, above, of an implicit argument for participatory citizenship within the debate. *The Scotsman* links these implicit assumptions, arguing that Scotland’s constitutional position should be decided:

“on moral and spiritual grounds. A country...content to have all major decisions affecting its well being be taken elsewhere so long as it has its own civil servants is bound to sink into a dependent, provincial state. A resurgence of national spirit would, according to all the experience of history, be the dynamic for economic progress, and the recovery of full political stature would be an inspiration to achievements in learning and the arts” (*The Scotsman*, 1968, p.8).

This attitude is called for, and perceived, in the Liberal assertion that “[t]he failure of our present political system to meet our needs has made the Scottish people newly conscious of our national identity. More importantly it has released our creative energies to solve the problems of adaption and make a fresh start” (1976, p.7). However, the form of participation and its focus has been unhelpful as, “[w]hile rejecting the policies of central

government as unsuitable for Scotland, we have illogically expected that same central government to come up with acceptable props for devolution” (1976, p.7). The time has come for Scotland to “assume a positive role” and debate the issues itself: while “[w]e do not accuse the British government of wilful neglect; the fault of centrism is that Westminster tries to do for us the things that we should do for ourselves” (1976, p.19).

Paterson notes the use of ‘responsibility’ particularly by pro-devolution figures on the political right, although also by Dalyell with regard to the proposed assembly’s lack of financial powers (1998a, p.4). However the term is used by more diverse sources than this. It is possible to see in these various uses a more significant meaning, though no doubt much use of the concept is strategic.

The constitutional debate, partly for strategic reasons and partly due to the nature of linguistic and political change, focused on the application of democratic concepts and there is some evident but implicit evaluative agreement over central principles: accountability, responsiveness, participation and identification. Such evaluative consensus is established through partisan interaction. Nevertheless, any such agreement within this ‘democratic debate’ is partly strategic and obscured by the constitutional debate’s partisan divisions. While a notion of ‘responsible’ government can be perceived as incorporating such evaluative agreement, and some notion of participatory citizenship and civic virtue, this is admittedly more speculative.

## §6. Conclusion.

Gow notes that by October 1974 Kilbrandon was “more or less the committed policy of every political party and could not quite be forgotten” and “[t]he devolution debate is no longer about whether there should be a Scottish assembly...[but] how soon...and what powers it should have” (Brown, 1975, p.60); the SNP assert Scots are asking what Scotland will be like “as they see the date of independence coming closer” (1974, p.3); Lang and Henderson (1975), noting the Conservative’s strategic error in waiting for Kilbrandon rather than implementing devolution, recognise in a chapter entitled ‘The Road to Devolution’, that there “were” (1975, p.9) arguments against devolution, past tense, but the Scottish Conservatives should now be given autonomy where the assembly will have authority (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.18); Craigie asserts that “we stand within sight of the creation of an independent state in Scotland” (Kennedy, 1976, p.93); JP Mackintosh’s constituency chairman feels the need to justify publishing Mackintosh’s *A Parliament for Scotland* “when the debate is in its final stages” (1976, p.2); to Clark and Drucker devolution seems inevitable (1976, p.5).

With this evident sense of inevitability, arguments for particular features to be incorporated into the devolution settlement, such as Proportional Representation (*Q*, January 1975, p.4) and an oval debating chamber to symbolise a less confrontational politics (*Q*, November 1975, p.9), are found. Such discussions foreshadow discussions aimed at creating a ‘new politics’ in the 1990s, when such a sense of the inevitability returned. The Liberals, indeed, assert that “in the minds of many Scots constitutional reform is linked with a change in the

style and content of politics” (1976, p.21). JP Mackintosh, asking whether the assembly will be “a glorified county council or a proper Parliament?” (1982a, p.99), argues the aim should be making the Scottish Parliament ‘more effective’ than the House of Commons and not dominated by government. Labour also argues that the Scottish and Welsh assemblies should not mirror Westminster, offering an opportunity to assess Westminster strengths and weaknesses (Labour, 1978, p.5), but links this to an evolutionary argument: while the assembly should not be a Westminster ‘carbon copy’ many of the proposals are modelled on Westminster where they have evolved “in a practical blend of efficient government and democratic rights. Parliament must endow Scotland with a comparable blend” (1978, p.8). Nevertheless, this sense of inevitability was short lived. Where Clarke and Drucker noted devolution’s inevitability (1976, p.5), the editors of the successor volume note the resumption of uncertainty (Drucker & Drucker (eds.), 1978, p.ix). That the democratic debate does not demonstrate definite progression is perhaps unsurprising given the 1979 referendum result. Attempts to construct the debate in terms of such positive progression would be incorrect. That there are shared democratic evaluative principles does not remove the partisan dynamic. As JP Mackintosh notes “devolution could have been carried out early in the early 1960s. After the Hamilton by-election it became harder as it had to be done, in part, as a concession to SNP pressure” (1982a, p.95).



**The Economy in the Constitutional Debate.**

**§1. Introduction.**

This chapter argues that the economy took an increasingly central place within the constitutional debate, and that it did so partly because of *who* was debating and *how* the debate progressed: through the effects of the partisan dynamics of the debate. The discourse was initially marked by rhetorical divisions with an explicitly political focus, but as the debate progresses these are increasingly perceived to be joined by economic issues. However, economic arguments were often used as substitutes for straightforward political and partisan arguments, reinforcing dynamics and tropes so far outlined. The discovery of oil, rather than spurring any major change within the debate, merely reinforced an already extant transformation of the rhetorical divisions of the debate.

It should be emphasised that this chapter is not an assessment of economic arguments within the debate. For example, while there is an argument over whether Scotland's contribution to the treasury exceeds Scottish public spending, this chapter will not provide 'the answer': as Rose comments, on such things "[r]easonable men - in so far as economists are reasonable - appear to differ" (*Q*, January 1976, p.6). Rather, this chapter examines *uses of the Scottish economy* and the *rhetorical effects* of such uses.

## §2. The Importance of Economic Arguments.

A tendency to regard the economy as central to the debate is clearly in evidence by the mid-1970s. Thus, Esman notes the SNP's main focus on economic issues, "the main Scottish grievance and anxiety in the 1960s" (1975, p.25), and 'leftish' position despite not supporting nationalisation, made them "a convenient and feasible vehicle for political protest" (1975, p.30). As early as 1970, Steel places economic arguments for 'self-government' as equally important to other arguments (1970, p.3), while Wright, having been asked to omit economic aspects of the debate from his discussion, notes "a danger that my own contribution will be a little like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark" (MacCormick, 1970, p.103).

That the economy was not a new issue in constitutional debates is evident from Sandy MacIntosh (1966), who addresses economic questions. He argues against the view that Scotland was poor pre-Union, only prospering after, and the related argument that Scotland benefits economically from the Union and would suffer through its discontinuation. In reply to such arguments he asserts that although economic benefits were used to entice Scotland into Union it was "100 year after 1707", before Scotland began to prosper (1966, p.8).<sup>127</sup> In economics, therefore, MacIntosh concentrates on traditional arguments over the Union's economic impact in Scotland. He *does* address contemporary economic issues, but in relation to these historical arguments, for example denying that Scotland is too poor to

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<sup>127</sup> Whatley disagrees: "[t]here is broad agreement among most historians that the period 1730–78 was when Scotland derived most benefit from the Union" (2000, p.100).

be self-governing. Paton also addresses such arguments, asserting that the claim that Scotland is too poor for self-government is “absurd” (1998, p.18) while Ludovic Kennedy states that the Union transformed Scotland into “a sort of glorified English province. But at the time we were too weak and poor to protest” (1968), implying that this is no longer the case. Kennedy dismisses many common contemporary economic arguments as ‘specious’: that Scotland can’t afford self-government is “a great myth”, but one “you”, the English, and “many Scots” believe (1968). Effectively rhetorically dividing his audience, utilising national caricatures and associating economic problems with ‘Westminster’, Kennedy asks if Scots are “less hardworking? Inventive? Resourceful? If not, our only problem is if we elect spendthrift...profligate and inefficient governments as you’ve had in Westminster these past 10 years” (1968). He references “the UK’s tottering economy. Yet you have the nerve to tell us, one of the thriftiest people in the world that we can’t afford [self government]?” (1968)

MacIntosh makes it clear that to him economics are secondary to political claims. His consideration of modern economic arguments is irrelevant as “Scotland’s demand for self-government is not based on the fact that she is self-supporting but on the inalienable right of every self-respecting **country** to rule over its own affairs” (1966, p.17). The preface to Ewing (1968), by the then SNP Convenor Dr. Robert MacIntyre, also implies economics is not the priority argument: “though the world may be moving towards increased economic co-operation...one of Scotland’s most pressing needs is to retain independence of thought and action - to be free to choose one’s priorities, to create a distinctive pattern of life” (Ewing, 1968, p.iv). Ewing herself addresses economics, but as one issue amongst others.

She argues that Scotland is wealthy and “with our own government we could soon be much more prosperous. We could change the whole quality of our life” (1968, p.vi). There “is no doubt” Scotland is wealthy, Ewing asserts, despite government refusal to release relevant figures (1968, p.vi). However, this use of economic argument is balanced by a more cultural assertion that the SNP are “fighting for the survival of an ancient nation” (Ewing, 1968, p.vi). Although “there is no doubt that with constructive government” there is the possibility of “developing a happy people with a standard of living and of civic responsibility which will set an example to all” (Ewing, 1968, p.23), the pamphlet contains only two pages devoted to the government ‘fiddling Scotland’s money’, compared to three pages on emigration, and six seeking to demonstrate government mendacity. It is clear from these documents that the economy is, unsurprisingly, seen as important, but not overwhelmingly so to SNP debate contributors early in the period and is often trumped by more straightforwardly political arguments.

### **§3. Economics and the Rise of The SNP.**

It is indisputable that the economy became a matter of particular concern during this period. Economics Professor Gavin McCrone notes concentration on high Scottish unemployment rates, the “incontestable fact that productivity and income per head of population are lower in Scotland than they are in Britain as a whole” (1969, p.13) and emigration. For our purposes, more important than what is, is what is *perceived* to be the case: how the economy is used and related to other factors. The economy is obviously a matter of concern during our period, given the frequency with which it is addressed within

the debate, and Scotland's economic problems are thus quickly linked to constitutional change. This linkage is most clearly developed over the debate's main rhetorical division between Labour and the SNP, and thus Labour/SNP sources will form the focus of a large part of this chapter. However, the linkage is also diffused, and this is also addressed.

One posited link between the economy and constitutional debate is the assertion that SNP success is a reaction to either the perception or reality of economic failure, foreshadowing accounts in Chapter Three. Thus, Dalyell asserts that "perhaps the most important factor" in the rise of the SNP was a "general feeling of dissatisfaction with the performance of the UK economy as a whole and a belief that Scotland might do better by herself" (1977, p.43). The SNP represents a "classic protest vote" (Dalyell, 1977, p.43). JP Mackintosh notes that "most observers agree that a deal of force behind the SNP" arises from a "sense of disappointment" over the recent economic record of British governments (1976, p.3); to Lang and Henderson, "minor movements in favour of devolution" over the last century are "protest movements against economic crisis, increased centralisation and interference that normally accompany" Labour governments (1975, p.8); Brown observes that "even the Financial Times" calls the situation "a revolt of rising expectations" (1975, p.7); and Magnus Magnusson, arguing for an SNP victory in Hamilton, notes that "some of the old doubts about independence are submerged by even more serious doubts about the future of Scotland's economy if something isn't done soon" (*Scotsman*, 30/10/67). Esman articulates the standard account: the SNP, fortified by new leadership and young, active, educated members and given economic credibility by oil, benefited from British economic decline. JP Mackintosh shares this view. Looking back at 1964 Labour candidates' criticisms of the

“thirteen wasted years” of Conservative government, Mackintosh notes his disappointment at contemporary economic conditions, growing public scepticism of politics, and sees SNP support as the result (1977, pp.7-9). Kilbrandon demonstrates the dominance of this perception. In relation to SNP successes, the report notes a perception of not enough being done about Scotland’s economic problems and government policies being perceived as “inappropriate to conditions in Scotland; at least these did not seem to be succeeding” (1973a, p.3). Thus:

“it was argued that if the Scots – an intelligent and hard working race...could gain substantial control over their own affairs, Scotland would prosper and its historic institutions would be revitalised. Moreover there was little doubt that these sentiments were shared in spirit by many Scots who, though they gave no support to the...[SNP] and had no wish to break the Union with England, were proud of Scotland and wanted to see its light shine more brightly in the world” (1973a, p.3).

While there was similar discontent in England, Kilbrandon asserts that England had “no separate identity and no nationalist party”, and so these remained unheard (1973a, p.4). While Kilbrandon recognises problems in asserting a direct correlation between SNP success and economic problems, exemplified by the lack of political ‘nationalism’ during the Depression, it notes the significance of regional policy’s perceived failure. In these circumstances the SNP was an “attractive vehicle for protest votes” (Kilbrandon, 1973a, p.106). In clear terms, an economic motivation for the SNP is prioritised: “Scottish nationalists appear rather to feel that the achievement of political independence would

make possible the independent management of the economy to the marked advantage of Scotland” (Kilbrandon, 1973a, p.104).

McCrone (1969) provides a more nuanced example of uses of the economy. He also asserts the link between the economy and SNP success in his influential contribution, which illustrates many of the economic arguments utilised throughout the debate. That an academic economist would write such a book demonstrates early entanglement of Scotland’s economy in the constitutional debate, and his book foreshadows economic arguments that would recur increasingly as the economy becomes central to the debate. As his book is presented as an academic assessment, it avoids some more obvious partisan rhetorical tactics. McCrone’s use of expressions such as ‘the national party’, indeed, implies a legitimisation of SNP claims to represent a national interest and an even-handed (if not nationalist sympathetic) approach, although there is a clear anti-nationalist logic underlying the book. As Harvie notes, McCrone (1969) gains authority from its academic presentation, authorship by a previous critic of government economic policy (Harvie, 1995, p.182), and apparent balance. The book is also influential, referenced in Kilbrandon (1973a), Home (1970), and, although critically, Kennedy (1976).

McCrone states that his aim is to understand the rise of ‘the national party’, despite their lack of clearly defined leadership or policies, apart from independence. The subtitle of *Scotland’s Future: The Economics of Nationalism* indicates McCrone’s predominant focus on economics in seeking to understand this popularity. McCrone asserts SNP success is even more remarkable given the small percentage of Scots supporting independence. That

polls show most Scots supporting Scotland having a “larger say in her own affairs” is unsurprising as, “no one likes the implication that he can’t run his own affairs, this is a somewhat emotive question unlikely to produce a negative response” (1969, p.3). Nevertheless, the majority would likely favour a Scottish parliament and he notes a widespread feeling that some Whitehall devised policies are unsuitable to Scottish conditions. However, he asserts, all evidence suggests no wish to ‘sever ties’ for independence, implicitly referencing tropes of the evaluative debate on nationalism. Such conventional references are found throughout McCrone (1969).

McCrone offers a number of potential reasons for SNP success, all of which portray the SNP as a beneficiary of external factors: an effective way of obtaining government attention; belief that a large SNP vote will result in a devolutionary compromise; lack of clarity on the difference between ‘home rule/devolution’ and independence, which “to many people....[is] represented as one of degree. In fact it is no such thing: the difference is one of principle. Either Scotland is part of the UK....or it is an independent state. There is no room for compromise” (1969, p.4). But none of these alone, McCrone argues, explains sudden SNP success. This requires ‘a wider view’, and McCrone sees SNP success closely related to economic factors: “though the National Party has never yet gained a seat at a General Election, there is no doubt that their support seems to come in cycles” (1969, p.5) McCrone associates periods of SNP success with periods of Labour government:



“There is a good deal of dissatisfaction with the status quo in Scotland and it may be that when in opposition Labour, as allegedly the more reformist of the two major parties is able to marshal this...economic planning...[is] represented as the keys to the promised-land. But when a period of office shows Labour’s panaceas to be bankrupt an alternative has to be found. The Liberals, whatever they may say they stand for, are thought of as occupying a moderate position between the Conservatives and Labour. It is the contented Scots who vote Conservative. Disillusion requires something more drastic, and Nationalism is the obvious choice” (1969, pp.5-6).

Labour and poor economic performance aids the SNP, who appear a ‘real alternative’, McCrone avers, when the two main parties appear similar:

“Whatever the other parties might promise...the National Party could be relied on to put Scotland’s interests first. Conservative and Labour...might claim that nationalism would be economically disastrous for Scotland, but to the average Scot this seemed unconvincing...when those parties seemed quite incapable of managing the British economy” (1969, pp.6-7).<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> McCrone’s argument here, of course, is based on a short period of time: thus Hamilton occurs under a Labour government but the major advances made by the SNP in the two 1974 elections occur as a Labour government is elected (February - as a minority government) and re-elected (October). McCrone admits this, recognising that his thesis goes some way to explaining the contemporary situation, but it is unclear if this will be a long lasting phenomenon (1969, p.7).

Politically too, McCrone states, the break up of the British Empire meant that constitutional change would have less serious external consequences.<sup>129</sup> Until 1968 a lack of major SNP successes meant that “to vote Nationalist was like voting Liberal in many constituencies: an elaborate way of abstaining and registering protest at the same time” (McCrone, 1969, p.7). Now the SNP have shown the ability to win seats, and if the election is a ‘foregone conclusion’, “Scots may decide to vote Nationalist as a means of applying pressure to Westminster” (1969, p.8). McCrone’s argument does not suggest that these concerns are purely economic; however, clearly economic dissatisfaction is a major factor. Further, he argues the largest section of the SNP’s vote consists of disillusioned Labour voters and continual SNP success depends on Labour’s ability to regain these votes, which depends on the economy.

Similarly, JP Mackintosh explains SNP success in economic terms, in the tellingly titled *Britain’s Malaise - Political or Economic?* (1977) Social democratic plans, he argues, depend on the kind of growth Labour claimed was possible once the Conservatives were out of office. However in retrospect Labour had no adequate theory for operating a mixed economy. Disappointment is, therefore, profound, with the major parties drifting to the extremes “despite Britain not seething with ideology” (1977, p.7). Much SNP support (as well as support for the Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru) comes “from the same feelings of disappointment over...what these parties describe as ‘London government’”

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<sup>129</sup> The link with economic arguments to the end of empire, interestingly, is different in McCrone (1969) to that found in accounts outlined in Chapter Three, where the loss of empire is connected to a decline of British identity and economic problems. McCrone’s argument that lesser external consequences would attend post-imperial constitutional change is the political equivalent of admitting the possibility of the marital separation of two people who have ‘stayed together for the children’, once those children had grown up.

(1977, p.9). Where frustrated English voters vote Liberal or National Front, “in Scotland and Wales there is another way of registering disapprobation and a feeling that things could not be much worse: that is by voting Nationalist” (1977, p.9).

The economy here explains SNP success, with the SNP characterised as a protest party. This is an answer frequently given by various contributors to the question, which Wilson asserts all posed after Hamilton: “was it just a Poujadist protest?” (1979, p.447) This perception is in part a *result* rather than a cause of the dynamics of the partisan debate, and the economy’s use in these dynamics facilitates the economy’s increasingly central place in that debate.

#### **§4. Focusing on the Economy.**

Focusing on economics as an explanatory factor often has a partisan evaluative purpose. The SNP can be portrayed as reactionary, with proffered solutions that do not address the economic problems that motivate it. This characterisation reinforces critiques illustrated in previous chapters. Thus, JP Mackintosh argues SNP success is due to a combination of promising more prosperity, the argument of insufficient return on tax, inadequate control over a remote government despite subsidising England, and “envy and dislike” of the “more confident and cosmopolitan stereotype upper-class Englishman” (1968, p.156).

Mackintosh emphasises the economy as central to the claims made *by the SNP*. While, as noted, SNP contributors use economic arguments, it is far from clear the economic case was prioritised, at least in literature published by, or sympathetic to, the SNP early in this period. This focus is common, however, in arguments put forward by the SNP's opponents. While he argues that much SNP campaigning is focused on the prosperity of Scotland, "despite the evidence" (Mackintosh, 1968, pp.156-157), Mackintosh admits the SNP's appeal is not *purely* material as many of its members are young and prosperous: rather it results from discontent with the effects of remote government, obviously including economic effects here. However, he asserts that SNP economic claims are untrue or nonsensical, complementing evaluative debate tropes.

Labour similarly focuses on attacking SNP economic policies, arguing that these would be damaging and divisive. Thus, "Scotland is heading for lean times...if the nationalists get their way" (1969a, p.1). The critique from relatively early in the debate is focused on *economic* implications of "separation from the rest of Britain" (Labour, 1969a, p2). 'Separation' would cost millions the SNP propose to "pull out of the air" (1969a, p.3). SNP policies on maintaining Scottish control of industry are referred to quaintly as a "'tatties and herrin' recipe for the future!" (1969a, p.3) This is contrasted with 'government success' at attracting inward investment, which would have been impossible under the SNP's "parish pump policy of 'Scotland for the Scots'" (1969a, p.4). To remove the positive influence is "the real *threat* lurking behind their frenzied flag-waving" (1969a, p.4) and their "village-green policy of flags before butter...patriotism on the dole!" (1969a, p.4) This economic focus is continued after Labour adopts devolution, for example in

*Labour's Analysis of the Economics of Independence* (1976c). The illogicality trope is deployed, aggressive language (such as 'separation' and 'threat') is used and emphasised, while focus on the economic aspects and costs of the SNP's case is maintained.

Therefore, the economy is used to critique the SNP and is obviously seen as a weak point by Labour. As the debate progresses, the linkage of political and economic arguments is reinforced through use of these tactics. Thus, Labour (1969a) in response to an apparent SNP attempt to blunt this economic attack by separating economic and political demands, seeks to close off this strategic possibility, while implicitly justifying the use of the SNP's economic case to critique their programme as a whole. It is impossible, states Labour, despite SNP claims, to have political separation without economic separation and "separation - lock stock and barrel - is still the mainspring of their fanciful appeal to the Scottish electors - the one distinctive plank in their programme" (1969a, p.5). To back up their case, Ewing is quoted as stating that political without economic self-government is a "sham" (Labour, 1969a, p.5). Similarly, in Labour (1976c), this attempt to reinforce the link of economic and political arguments and use the economic critique to discredit the SNP's political case is the justification for the pamphlet. This seeks to examine SNP claims that independence is possible without cost (Labour, 1976c, p.1). However, there are "definite and distinct" limits to the amount of independence possible without "endangering the essential unity of the United Kingdom" (1976c, p.2).

It is clear here that the economy is being used to back up partisan tropes discussed in earlier chapters, rather than to develop any new critique. This is also evident in non-Labour contributions, including by an SNP sympathetic contributor such as Ludovic Kennedy (1968).<sup>130</sup> Notwithstanding that Kennedy (1968) is a short pamphlet produced from a speech, it notably lacks any economic specifics, despite focusing part of its argument on economics, and relies on national identity/pride and the stereotype of the ‘thrifty’ Scot’. The Scottish economy is essentially used as a proxy argument. McCrone indicates one reason why uses of the economy may back up political arguments rather than significantly altering the terms of debate. Recognising much concentration on Scotland’s treasury contributions and their relation to Scottish spending, McCrone argues that such debates are only possible as the:

“[a]bsence of satisfactory statistics has made the situation obscure and created a climate in which imaginative guesswork flourished and even the wildest assertions were hard to refute. Against this background...nationalist demands that ‘Scotland must have control over her own purse’ and that it was ‘necessary to see where the money goes’ have found a good deal of support. Most citizens in any state regard themselves as overtaxed, and the suggestion that the money raised in taxes is being misused in some way gains credence rather easily” (1969, p.53).

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<sup>130</sup> See above p.271.

This suggests a strategic reason for the lack of economic specifics in a number of SNP contributions, although the lack of adequate statistics is raised by a number of contributors from diverse perspectives within the debate as problematic, and there is partisan disagreement as to who benefits from this lack of statistics.<sup>131</sup>

McCrone suggests that the SNP benefit from inadequate statistics and that more detailed statistics would disadvantage them, although some ‘nationalists’ do believe Scotland subsidises England and “[s]ome of those that wish to believe this will no doubt continue to do so, but the evidence gives no more support to their case than to those who believe that the earth is flat” (1969, p.106). McCrone criticises the simplistic view of economic union, which he argues the SNP utilises: if two states join in union, “it is not the case that what one gains the other must necessarily lose” (1969, p.53). Even if one nation is subsidising the other, it does not follow that they would be better on their own, as there would be the necessity to do things previously shared, to alter trade patterns and so on: “[n]one of this offers any support to the view that Scotland subsidises England, or that Scotland is getting less than its fair share” (1969, p.62). In contrast, and demonstrating that this subsidy argument is common from early in the debate, MacIntosh claims that rather than being ‘dependent on treasury grants’: “[n]ever since the Union has Scotland received more than she has paid in and no English Minister has ever said so, though we may be sure that if the Treasury paid out more than Scotland contributed, a great song would be made about it” (1966, p.10).

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<sup>131</sup> This is mentioned by, for example, Ewing (1968); *The Scotsman* (1968); Simpson in McCormick (1970); Brown and Tait in Brown (1975); Kennedy in Kennedy (1976); several contributors to *Q*.

It is clear that the tactic of attacking the economics of nationalism is common and seen as politically effective by Labour. Further, it is notable, perhaps due to the lack of adequate statistical information, that these critiques reinforce partisan critiques examined in earlier chapters rather than adding any significantly different and fundamentally economic arguments: the language of ‘severing’ ties, irresponsibility and emotionalism, for example, is frequently employed in relation to the economy. Of course, as with the political dynamic, these economically centred partisan arguments were not uncontested. For example, Gavin Kennedy (1976) attempts to reverse these anti-nationalist economic arguments. He uses a structure that evaluatively redescribes SNP and Labour economic positions, addressing three different economic arguments against independence: that Scotland is ‘too poor’, ‘too rich’ and ‘too dominated’. The contradictory first two illustrate inconsistency in the anti-independence case versus a consistent case for independence. The last argument is asserted to be merely wrong: placing it after the two contradictory arguments prioritises the consistent independence argument. Kennedy demonstrates that while economic arguments were present but not central to SNP contributions at the start of this period, by 1976 they are central, as Kennedy claims the SNP are motivating the economic debate: “[t]he debate about the Scottish economy has followed the electoral wave of the SNP” (1976, p.47).

It is unsurprising, to Kennedy, that an economic debate should result from Hamilton and the SNP is credited with beginning that debate, rather than reacting to economic decline. Thus, Hamilton inspired the Home Committee, which in turn inspired Kilbrandon after which “the debate went into hibernation” (Kennedy, 1976, p.49). However, after the two



1974 General Elections, “independence was clearly once again on the agenda” (Kennedy, 1976, p.49). Therefore, “the political arithmetic of the advance of the SNP was clearing the minds of the Unionists” (Kennedy, 1976, p.49). Through his account, Kennedy seeks to polarise the debate by characterising the SNP’s opponents as ‘Unionists’. He also implicitly claims historical authority for his evaluative account by recounting the debate in the past tense. This is demonstrated in his criticism of the contemporary lack of complete statistics. While there are reasons given by successive governments to explain the impossibility of producing full economic statistics, Kennedy asserts that rather this is due to ‘disinterest’, which neatly reinforces the responsiveness critique of the democratic debate; the only likely alternative reason he suggests is ‘malevolence’ (1976, p.47). The effect of the past tense suggests that history has shown his assessment correct, although, as previously noted, others differ over who benefits from the dearth of adequate statistics.

Kennedy singles out McCrone’s account: “[l]ike all political debate much nonsense was produced on all sides” and “[s]ome Scots (few English politicians took the slightest interest in the matter) even rejected the whole idea of an independent Scotland on the dubious grounds that it was impossible” (1976, p.47), referencing the remoteness and responsiveness critiques in relation to ‘English politicians’. However, the debate did not remain at this “abysmal level”, as “in 1969 Gavin McCrone (Oxford and Glasgow) produced his contribution” (Kennedy, 1976, p.47). Use of McCrone’s academic pedigree may be intended to illustrate why McCrone should be taken seriously and subliminally that, as an academic, he is distanced from Scotland’s real conditions. Kennedy asserts that McCrone made no attempt to defend the economics of Unionism, which is “total

centralised decision making”, but argued instead for ‘economic devolution’, with his main criticisms directed at “the consequences of separation” (1976, p.47). This again links Unionism with unresponsive, remote government and, by acknowledging that McCrone’s is a serious contribution but even he attacks ‘separatism’ with no attempt to defend ‘the economics of Unionism’, implies the *Unionist* economic case is weak.

Quoting McCrone’s statement that independence is possible but would require necessary ‘drastic and painful’ changes, Kennedy recognises the implication that this pain is unnecessary: “if only a simple adjustment, such as devolution is made” Scotland can get the benefits of the Union with England and the benefits of ‘Home Rule’ (Kennedy, 1976, p.48). Overall, Kennedy recognises that McCrone targets the costs of independence, arguing these outweigh potential benefits: that independence was not possible economically as “it could not solve the fundamental problem of the Scottish economy. Scotland was too weak, too poor and too vulnerable for it to opt for independence and maintain, let alone increase its living standards” (1976, p.49). However, Kennedy then addresses arguments that Scotland is ‘too rich’ for independence, which he argues was the Unionist response to North Sea oil. This argument is examined below but clearly the structure implies that even if McCrone’s arguments *were* relevant, they no longer *are* as the situation has changed.

While clearly the state of the Scottish economy is important, more important are the uses to which the economy is put and the relationship between economic and political aspects of the debate. The economy is increasingly centralised during the debate not due to worsening

Scottish economic conditions but because economic arguments are used to bolster, and indeed act as proxies for, partisan and political arguments. This is to some degree aided by the frequently commented on lack of comprehensive statistical information on Scotland's economic condition. As the evaluative debate over nationalism is highlighted within the partisan debate, here there is also evidently a foregrounding of the national economy.

### **§5. Institutional Economics and Partisan Dynamics.**

The increasing centrality of economic arguments further enforces a need to defend political structures, including the status quo, in economic terms. As Rose notes, “[a]ny choice among alternatives is influenced by how one diagnoses the causes of present political discontents in Scotland” (1975, p.6): to perceive the causes as economic is to imply that the solution should be economic; from this point of view devolution or nationalist may be considered irrelevant as is, he notes, the view of the business community (1975, p.6).

Scotland's institutional nationalism, discussed in Chapter Four, the location and identification of Scottishness in particular institutions and the defence of those institutions, is evident in uses of the economy within the debate, with a tendency towards seeking institutional solutions to economic problems. This ‘institutional economics’ view is illustrated in *The Scotsman's* statement that “to succeed in re-invigorating the economy we need a better political structure” (1968, p.2) and Paton's statement that self-government is necessary to “promote the spiritual and economic welfare of the Scottish nation” (1998, p.18). National economic success or failure is seen to be attributable to institutional

structures and, conversely, potential impact on economic performance is a significant standard by which institutional structures are judged. Not only is the economy linked to constitutional reform as explanation of the rise, and critique, of the SNP but the link is reinforced through Scotland's institutional nationalism.

Arguments that institutional reform will lead to economic improvement are common, for example the SNP's claim that independence would release "the inventive energies of the people in Scotland in every field of human activity" (1974, p.1). McCrone admits that there could be an economic advantage to devolution increasing accountability and responsibility. Lack of citizen involvement in politics has economic affects, as government efforts to tackle economic problems are treated with scepticism and indifference and so "stand little chance of bringing about the change of spirit which is necessary for success" (1969, p.88). McCrone argues that while SNP arguments that a 'Scots government' would make a psychological difference should be treated with caution, if there is any truth in this claim it does not require 'separation': "[e]ffective Scottish leadership could make its contribution through a Scottish Parliament within the United Kingdom quite as easily as outside. The present system makes this difficult" (1969, p.89). The STUC General Secretary also argues that devolution could lead to more effective (British and Scottish) government and increase political participation due to the "belief that in Scotland a more meaningful use of resources could be made contributing to the solution to many problems" (Labour, 1976a, p.1). *The Scotsman* suggests "a drive for efficiency and productivity in industry would get impetus from a feeling that we were in business for ourselves" (1968, p.6), and a "resurgence of national spirit would, according to all the experience of history,

be the dynamic for economic progress” (1968, p.8). Thus, economic progress is linked to arguments from responsibility and participation within the democratic debate as well as institutional nationalism.

The developing rhetorical dynamics of the debate reinforces this ‘institutional economics’ trend. The economic implications of constitutional reform are used as the positive rational for reform as well as critique. McCrone, for example, suggests economics are important in making the ‘political’ decision on reform. To ask if Scotland *can* be independent is ‘absurd’: Scotland is a highly industrialised country, “comparable with other European countries” (1969, p.52). While we may ask if Scotland can ‘go it alone’, this is the wrong question, “irrelevant to Scotland’s future and dangerous as it stirs up animosity between the people who, whatever happens, have got to live together on these islands” (McCrone, 1970, p.10). Rather, the relevant criteria as opposed to the economics of union, is the speculative post-union economic situation. While it is difficult to know the exact situation that would obtain, particularly as a Scottish government’s priorities would be different, independence would require “adjustments...some of which might be drastic and painful; but if Scotland wanted to be independent, there is obviously no question of her being unable to afford it” (1969, p.52). Rather, assessment should be made on how independence would affect Scotland’s standard of living, the likely necessary ‘adjustments’ and her ability to take economic decisions:

“it is perhaps unfortunate that so much of the discussion has been focused on [whether Scotland can afford independence], for in some respects it is a red herring. If Scotland really has anything to gain from separation, it must be from the greater freedom she would have to follow an economic policy more closely related to the needs of her economy...[however] Political Sovereignty does not imply that economic policy can be formed regardless of external restraints; and the scope which Scotland would have for initiation in this field must therefore be carefully considered” (McCrone, 1969, p.52).

Thus, “[t]he really important question is whether Scotland’s economic problems could be more effectively tackled...This depends on if [Scotland] can pursue different policy goals and more effectively” (McCrone, 1969, p.69). While ‘very attractive’, Scotland is reliant on external markets and “the English could hardly be expected to refrain from imposing duties on Scots goods, if the Scots levied tariffs on theirs. Some type of free trade or common market arrangement is therefore essential” (McCrone, 1969, p.69). He asserts that the SNP recognises this in their denial of any intention to set up customs posts. However, only political union guarantees access to English markets, the original motivation for Union: “free trade...agreements can be signed without involving political union; but whatever the *de jure* position such schemes can always be terminated by one of the parties” (1969, p.70). Thus, “such schemes are a second best to political union” (1969, p.70). Given the disparity of size with England, “if Scotland ceased to be part of the [UK]...Westminster could ride roughshod over its interest” (1969, p.79). UK economic integration has clear political implications. Here, again, use of the economy reinforces

critiques of the SNP seen in previous chapters, as the divisive consequences of separation are emphasised. This is contrasted to the definite current situation. However, this does not mean, to McCrone, that the status quo is ideal:

“The forces that give rise to nationalism are serious and must not be ignored. A large body of moderate opinion is dissatisfied with the existing institutional arrangements; to ignore this would be to invite support for extremist solutions. What is required is a system which gives greater flexibility in the formation of policy and greater opportunity for involvement. In the economic sphere this is the purpose of regional policy...in the political sphere...devolution or Home Rule” (1969, p.107).

‘The Case for Devolution’ is rhetorically presented as a median position between the extremes of the status quo and independence. In contrast to the latter, “[t]he economic implications of...[devolution] are, of course, minor” (McCrone, 1969, p.81). There are problems with devolution, McCrone admits, and though some may be overcome, “others are inherent in the nature of all systems of divided government” (1969, p.86).<sup>132</sup> However, as opposed to the decision on independence that should be made on the basis of the economic prospects, “the case for home rule or devolution rests largely on an assessment of political issues” (McCrone, 1969, p.98): devolution could resolve dissatisfaction over accountability, while avoiding many awkward economic problems of ‘separation’. One advantage would also be that it would end some of the ‘make believe’, as Scotland would

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<sup>132</sup> These are the same issues singled out by *The Hansard Society* (1967); Home (1970); Kilbrandon (1973a; 1973b). See Chapter Five, p.226, fn.118.

not be able to “blame...the misrule of Westminster”, while the benefits of Union would become explicit (1969, p.98). Nevertheless, McCrone admits, while constitutional reform is a political question, it cannot be settled without regard to economic consequences (1969, p.104). Indeed it would be difficult for McCrone to argue otherwise, given his assessment of independence on the grounds of potential economic effects. Nationalism is rightly ‘highly emotional’: “Patriotism cannot be reduced to a series of purely logical deductions. But it would be a tragedy...if the country’s future were decided in ignorance of the economic consequences” (1969, p.104). McCrone, therefore, reasserts the importance of economics as an institutional standard and uses economics to reinforce partisan critiques of nationalism. In so doing, he reinforces the centrality of economics to the debate.

Partisan uses of this ‘institutional economics’ view, or of economics as an institutional standard, are evident in more obviously straightforwardly political contributions. That the main dynamic of the debate is between Labour and the SNP is important in explaining the rhetorical evolution of the economic aspect of the debate. Given the Labour’s traditional class appeal, it is unsurprising that their concentration should be on economic matters. This critique and the nationalist response reinforces the centrality of the economy to the debate. Labour (1976b), while criticising the SNP on economic grounds does not, indeed cannot given the focus of its critique, deny that economics is a legitimate ground for debate in regard to constitutional reform. Therefore, the contributor and the conventions centralise the economy. Thus, constitutional reform is “the most important issue ever to have faced Scotland - nothing less than the shape of its political *and economic* future” (Labour, 1976b, p.1; my italics). Labour rejects ‘separation’ as any scheme of constitutional change must



safeguard “the social and economic well being of the people of Scotland” (1969b, p.1), associating such ‘well being’ with UK unity. Recognising concern at Scottish economic problems as well as political discontents, the document notes both political developments such as the establishment of Kilbrandon, and economic reform such as the establishment of the HIDB. However, that Scotland has extreme economic problems, the regional policies required to solve these necessitate central control and this “strengthens our rejection that Scotland should be economically or politically torn apart from the United Kingdom” (Labour, 1969b, p.21). What is important is:

“the impact on Scotland following changes in the internal cohesion of the United Kingdom and particular in the cohesion of the United Kingdom economy. Conflict can and does occur in designing machinery of government between the needs of efficiency and democratic public accountability” (1969b, p.6).

Given this conflict, “[t]he economic case for economic decision taking at the [UK]...level and against fragmentation of economic planning powers is overwhelming”, fitting trends towards larger economic blocs such as the EEC (1970, p.6). Further, given Scotland’s reliance on attracting investment from England and that her attraction to non-UK investment is reliant on her membership of the UK, “there could be no half measures about separation” (Labour, 1969b, p.6). Indeed it is asserted that one “cannot disentangle economics and politics” despite the SNP’s “splendid phrase ‘economic inter-dependence’” (Labour, 1970, p.7). An independent England would favour her own industries over

Scotland's and so "[t]he truth is that a separate Scottish economy is only possible if people are willing to accept a dramatic fall in living standards... They are not" (Labour, 1970, p.7).

Labour (1976b) is structured in a way that heightens the contrast between the SNP and Labour, written in a modified 'question and answer' format, with a statement of SNP 'myth' followed by the corresponding Labour 'fact', thus privileging Labour's case over Labour's characterisation of SNP arguments. The document demonstrates how such strategic economic criticisms of the SNP were combined with economic defences of the current structure. Thus, the failure of the Scottish private sector to invest or adapt to emerging markets is blamed for Scotland's economic problems, which "induced, and was not caused by, state intervention, which only began when the problem became apparent" (1976b, p.2). Regional policies were the result, "even though in retrospect more should have been done to restructure and improve the long term competitiveness of industry already operating in Scotland" (1976b, p.2). This mirrors the Labour (1970) argument of neglect by "private industrialists and absentee landlords" (1970, p.3). Strong Westminster government is "a necessary part of improving Scottish industrial performance and cannot be held responsible for the falling off in Scotland's industrial effort" (1976b, p.2). The pamphlet questions the assumption that Scotland suffers disproportionately from Westminster policies and is significantly poorer than the rest of the UK, rather being subsidised in a number of ways such as through the SDA, of which it is noted there is no UK equivalent. The document after addressing some perceived SNP 'myths' about current economic circumstances, seeks to undermine perceived 'myths' about a post-independence Scotland: that Scotland could have an independent, viable economic policy and that

‘benefits and privileges’ of British membership would remain. Rather, it is argued, the Scottish economy is inextricably integrated within the UK economy, and ‘key sectors’ are largely in external hands: “[a] separatist Scotland would immediately become one of the most externally dominated economies in the world...and there would be great difficulties for those planning its independent future” (1976b, p.4).

Labour argues that this external dependence also suggests that it is more realistic to be pessimistic about economic prospects: “[d]o the separatists expect that an English government would continue to operate...[Scottish plants currently part of British public services] as if nothing had happened?” (1976b, p.5) This utilises the economy to change the evaluative polarity of ‘independence’ from self-sufficiency to *dependence*, reinforced by claims that Scotland does not have the technological expertise necessary for a “modern *self-sufficient* economy” (1976b, p.4; my italics). Rather, the pamphlet argues, leadership from agencies like the SDA is needed: “the blossoming of the new Scottish entrepreneurship which the separatists...assume will follow independence seems likely to prove an illusion” (1976b, p.4), reliant on over optimistic assumptions. This is a biased evaluation, of course, but again reinforces partisan critiques, while utilising the economy as a standard of judgement. Indeed, the last two sections of the pamphlet clearly demonstrate use of the economy as substitute for partisan political arguments. Agonistic language is used, even in the title, ‘The Menace of Separation’. The SNP ‘myth’ that “Labour has done practically nothing to meet Scotland’s desire for greater control over its own affairs” is confronted by the ‘fact’ that “[t]he government’s devolution proposals contain a wide range of opportunities for...Scottish people to shape their own destiny” (1976b, p.7). There are no

economic specifics in the arguments provided, rather a reaffirmation of political arguments against 'separatism'. Thus, "the economic structure of the UK is too closely interlinked to make far reaching economic devolution feasible. Some of the powers...demanded under devolution would effectively make Scotland a separate State" (1976b, pp.7-8). Abandoning the myth/fact structure of the pamphlet to reinforce the point, Labour asserts that:

**"[T]he separatists have ignored the political realities of Scotland in their lack of attention to the key areas of the distribution of income and wealth, the role of the Trade Unions, Industrial democracy, economic planning and the role of the state in controlling the means of production" (1976b, p.9).**

The institutional economic view and uses of the economy to reinforce other arguments are evident in non-Labour contributions, demonstrating that this use of the economy becomes conventional. Thus, the Liberals link institutional form and economic success, arguing that Scotland's economic problems demonstrate the need for devolution. As well as the political reasons given for this state of affairs, a lack of "financial control in Scotland" is blamed and the answer offered is "a Scottish Parliament controlling all Home Policy *including* taxation", although this does not require full independence (in Hanham, 1969, p.191).

Home (1970) illustrates the diffusion of the economic aspect of the debate in a more developed fashion. The report highlights that economics are seen as the most important factor determining the room for any devolution, asserting that the committee was ‘impressed’ with the amount of evidence and concern that reform might weaken economic ties with England and asserting the opinion that “[n]othing done in the political field should harm the free flow of capital, income, labour and services between Scotland and England” (1970, p.v).<sup>133</sup> This prioritisation of economics is reinforced through Home (1970) not least by its structure, which begins with an examination of ‘Scotland’s economy’ as a prerequisite to any future discussion of political reform:

“[r]eform of government may be desirable and important, but it is on Scotland’s economic structure and...industrial ability to compete that Scotland’s stature, prosperity and happiness depend” (Home, 1970, p.15).

Constitutional reform should not “diminish or retard Scotland’s economic development” (1970, p.16). However, “like everyone else who has attempted to examine the Scottish economy we have been short of accurate statistical information” (1970, p.15). Nevertheless, Home states, reinforcing the political argument of the report, the evidence that *is* there “leans decisively” towards the maintenance of the UK as “best suited to Scotland’s present and future needs”, and “we have seen no evidence to indicate that Scotland does not benefit from the Union. Nor have we received any support for the theory

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<sup>133</sup> In his autobiography Home is even stronger: economic considerations are “the *sine qua non* of any sensible plan of devolved powers; and any Scotsman who ignores that has forgotten which way his bread is buttered” (1976, p.105).

that Scotland subsidises other parts of the...[UK], as some separatists have maintained” (1970, p.17). Home asserts that “the power of government is necessary to assist the redistribution of industry” (1970, p.19). Nevertheless, within centrally determined policies there is room for increased flexibility “to take account of Scotland’s diversity and distinctive needs” (Home, 1970, p.20). Already there is some such flexibility, Home argues, but more is necessary as, “until relatively recently there has been too indiscriminate an application to Scotland of policies to cope with economic difficulties...which are the opposite of those from which Scotland suffers” (1970, p.20). Thus Home admits the possibility of different policies, and past mistakes but denies that this is an inherent problem that cannot be solved within the status quo.

Home’s (1970) assessment of the case for ‘a separate Scotland’ has an entirely economic basis, reminiscent of partisan criticisms of SNP economics outlined above. It is noted that “[a]ny nation can exist independently - at a price”, but this price “economically, politically and socially would be unacceptable to the Scottish people” (Home, 1970, p.25) and the majority of evidence opposes this option, particularly “[w]hen elsewhere in the world, the general movement is towards economic union” (Home, 1970, p.25). The maintenance of economic union has ‘many consequences’: “[c]entral decisions become necessary over a broad field, for instance in regional aid and industrial development policy” (Home, 1970, p.25) and give economies of scale, which is especially important given the heavy investment necessary to modernise Scottish industry. Thus, “[t]he Scottish economy is so clearly integrated with that of the rest of the UK that an unscrambling would be both difficult and hazardous” (1970, p.26). Indeed, “[i]t must be open to question whether a

nation can exercise genuine political independence if its economy is vitally interlinked with that of its neighbours” (1970, p.26). Mirroring Labour arguments quoted above, Home asserts that an independent Scotland would be so *dependent* on factors beyond its control that, “sovereignty and the room for independent action would be severely curtailed” (1970, p.26). Therefore, “[t]he economic losses occasioned by separation from the...[UK] would not, in our view, be balanced by any advantages to Scotland” (1970, p.28).

The concentration on the economic case against independence is evident, although not because it is perceived to be the main rallying cry of the SNP, but because the economy is regarded as the main standard of judgement for institutions. However, it is telling that this standard is unevenly applied. Thus, Home (1970) discusses federalism, which is asserted to be a difficult system normally implemented in large countries with great diversity: “[t]he basic considerations which justify federal systems elsewhere have been largely absent in Great Britain”, which historically has preferred “the simplest form of Government. We find that the reasons were good” (1970, p.28). Federalism requires an inflexible ‘written constitution’ leading to a political system of “legalistic rigidity” (1970, p.29). Such a development would bring no benefit to either Scotland or Britain and so “the creation of the artificial barriers involved in a federal state would, in our opinion, be wrong” (1970, p.29). Only after federalism has effectively been dismissed on grounds of problematic constitutional architecture is the economy raised. Federalism would not give ‘sovereignty’ to Scotland, as there are strong centralising pressures in a federal system inherent in an economic union (1970, p.29). Thus, “[a]s the different geographical areas of Great Britain

are economically interdependent, it would be undesirable for Scotland to lose effective influence over the environment within which her economy must operate” (1970, p.29). Such arguments are similar to those seen above against ‘separatism’, for example that “the economic structure of the UK is too closely interlinked to make far reaching economic devolution feasible. Some of the powers...demanded under devolution would effectively make Scotland a separate State” (Labour, 1976b, pp.7-8). The economy is used to bolster political arguments, here by conflating federalism and ‘separatism’ and deploying conventional economic critiques against the latter.

### **§6. A Thin Veneer? The Impact of Oil.**

The discovery of North Sea oil impacted on uses of the economy. This is demonstrated through sources declassified under the 30-year rule in 2002 and 2004. Official correspondence from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 1971, demonstrate the seriousness with which the issue was taken by central government. A DTI memo argues that “the idea [of oil revenue going into a Scottish fund] should have a firm answer before it goes too far”, while another official regarded the idea as, “if mistaken, at least understandable”, given the decline of Scotland’s heavy industrial sector (*The Scotsman*, 1/1/2002). Two years later a telex from the Scottish Office to the DTI asked for more information as, “we are under government pressure from our ministers for material and royalties from oil to counter the current campaign by the SNP” (*The Scotsman*, 1/1/2004). However, it should be evident that the economy had already become central to the debate by this point. Evidence of oil’s *perceived* centrality is abundant: Kellas notes the centrality



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of the economy and oil as a solution to economic problems (1976, p.63); Esman's title, *Scottish Nationalism, North Sea Oil and the British Response* (1975), indicates oil's perceived centrality. He argues that the SNP were fuelled by oil, which gave credibility to its economic arguments and thus set the agenda to which 'British' parties responded. Similarly, Hunter notes that oil, "whatever may be said about its morality, encapsulated a change in Scottish political perceptions" (*Q*, May 1976, p.10), including a perception of better economic prospects out-with Union: "[t]he truth or falsehood of such assumptions is not at issue here. That they are widely held in Scotland is...irrefutable" (*Q*, May 1976, p.10). Unsurprisingly, pamphlets were produced such as the SNP's *The Reality of Scotland's Oil*, which hails oil after independence as "a new panacea for Scotland's ills" (Dekker, 1973, p.2); Simpson claims that the viability of an independent Scotland is, after oil, "widely accepted" (McCormick, 1970, p.173); Smallwood, while disagreeing on the perception, agrees on its effect, arguing that as long as the view prevails that independence would bring enormous economic benefits, anything short of this will be seen as inadequate (MacCormick, 1970, p.99). SNP press releases also demonstrate frequent comments on the oil issue, although often reinforcing other points. Thus, while one SNP press release asserts that Kilbrandon ignores the extent of importance of "Scotland's oil wealth" (August 4<sup>th</sup> 1974) and its implications for constitutional change, other uses of oil reinforce non-oil related arguments. For example, Gordon Wilson argues that the Offshore Petroleum Development (Scotland) Bill showed a "flagrant disregard of the interests of Scotland and the rights of their citizens" (SNP Press Release, December 5<sup>th</sup> 1974).

Oil often bolsters arguments already made prior to its discovery: for example, arguments over the comparative levels of Scottish contributions to the Treasury and public spending, evident at the start of this period.<sup>134</sup> Economic critiques of the SNP were already common and the kind of economic critiques made did not alter significantly. Thus, after the discovery of oil and Labour's conversion to devolution, the economics of the SNP are still perceived as the SNP's weak point. For example, Labour (1976c) assesses two SNP pamphlets: lack of clear figures allows the SNP to get away with much, we are told. Their economics are "ill thought out, lacking in substance and understanding, and based more on the emotional rhetoric that oil revenues alone can bring success, rather than economic analysis" (1976c, p.2). However, a "clear assessment" shows an independent Scotland is not the best economic option as there are limits to the degree of economic independence possible without "endangering the essential unity of the [UK]" (1976c, p.2).

Some critiques did intensify after the discovery of oil. For example, Dalyell argues that not only is the economy an important issue, but it is a motivating one for an SNP, which he accuses of being motivated by 'greed' - although the SNP deny being "fuelled by North sea oil" (1977, p.45), they are sustained by "visions of Scots hogging the North sea oil revenues" (1977, p.2) as before oil they were "unable to sustain...electoral success over two parliamentary elections in any constituency" (1977, p.45). Once oil was discovered, Dalyell suggests, "the SNP immediately sensed it had struck oil in more senses than one" (1977, p.46). While noting that it does not behove politicians to be "unduly prim" about exploiting an opportunity (Dalyell, 1977, p.54), he notes that the SNP uses the "sheer

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<sup>134</sup> See above, p.283.

fantasy” of oil as panacea: the effective SNP campaign is “not and never has been ‘it’s...self-government’. Far more effective has been ‘it’s oor oil!’” (1976, p.3) The effective retort is ‘Tit-for-tat’: “OK mate, if it’s oor oil, then it’s our Nottingham and Yorkshire coal, our Cornish China Clay...” (1976, p.3) However, the criticism of SNP ‘greed’ is found before oil was discovered or its potential realised, as can be seen in *The Scotsman*’s denial that nationalism is motivated by a post imperial “calculating spirit” (1968, p.5). In most cases oil does not alter the essential point at issue. Thus, in Labour (1977a), it is clear that oil is being used to develop an already existing economic critique:

### **WE CHARGE...[the SNP] WITH:**

**GREED** because they are prepared to grab the revenues from oil and let our friends south of the border, whatever the circumstances, go to the wall...

**MISREPRESENTATION** because they twist every figure, every statistic to prove their bogus case. Any index which shows Scotland favourably is ignored.

**IGNORANCE** of the economic facts of life - an integrated economy” (Labour, 1977a, p.1).

Indeed, in the same way that opponents of the SNP focused on their economic arguments, as illustrated above, the same can be stated with regard to oil. Thus, Labour (1976b) discusses three post independence ‘myths’ all focusing on the impact of oil, and it is asserted that “the only really forceful argument that the separatists have put forward in favour of independence is based on revenues from North Sea oil” (1976b, p.5). Yet their assumptions and figures are “wildly wrong” as they “assume that high oil prices will

continue, yet all countries are currently examining alternative sources of energy” (1976b, p.6). The UK, we are told, is the only country hoping for the continuation of high oil prices and England would change its policies if “cut off” from oil (1976b, p.6). All these reinforce partisan critiques of the SNP as over optimism and unrealistic. The SNP are claimed to be optimistic in their assumptions of future oil yield; ignoring the necessity to return the UK government’s initial stake in the oil fields, to renegotiate contracts and the role of the British National Oil Company. Again, these arguments are from a partisan perspective, and the ‘fact’ elements are themselves speculative, but clearly oil is reinforcing critiques of the SNP discussed in previous chapters.

That this critique had some effect can be seen by the comments of the SNP’s Willie McCrae, quoted by Labour: “[i]t may be that we in Scotland have lost sight of the fact that the battle for nationalism is not a battle for material things but a battle for the survival of our culture. I grow anxious, I fear for a Scotland conceived in oil and brought forward in greed” (Labour, 1977a, p.4). The effect of this critique can also be seen implicitly in *Calgacus*, where an attempt to refute the charge of greed is made by asserting that if oil was in England, the SNP would be “delighted”, as this would take pressure off Scotland and refute the claim of greed which “needless to say is the sort of smear an emergent nation can expect from the post-imperial establishment. But it should have enough confidence in itself to put Scotland first fearlessly and explain why” (No.1, Winter 1975, p.15). Kennedy (1976) provides a more developed response, providing an account of the significance of oil, which again seeks to invert attacks on SNP economics, portray the SNP as the main motor for the economic debate and evaluatively prioritise independence. After

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discussing the argument that Scotland is 'too poor' for independence he discusses the contrasting argument that Scotland is 'too rich', which he argues is the Unionist response to oil. Kennedy argues that oil and the SNP are both motivating factors in the debate and again the principled case of the SNP is implicitly linked to the 'opportunistic' Unionists, for whom "it was necessary to meet the nationalist sentiments of the Scots by conceding the case for devolution (while trying to minimise the powers of the devolved assembly) and to hang onto Scotland to claim sovereignty over the oil" (1976, p.49). This implies that all Scots share nationalist sentiments equivalent to the SNP and seeks to reverse the argument from 'greed': here 'Unionists' are greedy and opportunistic. Further, Kennedy claims, the SNP was quick to seize on the implications of oil and undertook to *alert* Scotland to this: "the SNP...campaign to claim it was Scotland's oil and relate the expenditures involved to the lives of ordinary Scots was aimed at raising the confidence of the Scots in themselves and their future after independence" (Kennedy, 1976, p.50), while the 'Unionist' response of 'questioning the morality' of this campaign "came oddly from the British who had only recently ruled a British empire, who were always first to defend British interests and who wanted the oil to be British" (Kennedy, 1976, p.50). Kennedy thus positively evaluates his position while denigrating his opponents.

Kennedy asks if Scotland is "still too poor to be independent" after the discovery of oil and, conceding that McCrone had the excuse of being written before the discovery of North Sea oil, states that this is not the case for "Christopher Smallwood (Oxford and Edinburgh)", who in January 1976 argued independence "was not worth the candle" because oil made Scotland "too rich to be free" (Kennedy, 1976, p.50). The reference to

Smallwood's academic posts has the same purpose as with McCrone (Oxford and Glasgow) above, while Smallwood's arguments are dismissed as "the old argument of cost and benefit once again" (Kennedy, 1976, p.50), although Kennedy is not above deploying such arguments himself. Smallwood's argument that the price of oil would drive up the interest rate of a Scottish currency and therefore devastate Scottish industry has, we are told, appeared in Parliament and the press "with the regularity that is normally associated with an arch PR exercise" (Kennedy, 1976, p.51). This statement, ironically, comes shortly after Kennedy praises the SNP's 'It's Scotland's Oil' campaign and admits that it was a "propaganda exercise" (1976, p.50). Kennedy illustrates the 'Unionist' campaign with the example of a former Labour paymaster general who, Kennedy informs us, "being British...naturally concludes that Scotland would be much better off to hand over its oil revenue to the British treasury" (1976, p.51). In response, he notes that "polemics against independence on this score have the hallmarks of warning the Scots about the evils of the pox while doing their damndest to catch it themselves" (Kennedy, 1976, p.51).

To Kennedy, therefore, the one argument that oil strongly reinforces, that of greed, is reversed and linked to the 'malevolent' Brits. Indeed, if anything, the emergence of oil seems to have shifted the 'British' from the 'disinterest' Kennedy accuses them of in his earlier argument against McCrone, to 'malevolence' and greed. It is notable that throughout Kennedy's paper, a sharp distinction is made between Scots and 'the British', the two identities polarised with no recognition of any overlap or shared interests. Kennedy's introduction gives an indication of this perceived clear distinction and the resulting perception of the incommensurable claims: Scotland need not exploit

anybody and “[t]he charge of selfishness and the politics of greed...is based on the selfish extraction of other people’s natural resources” (Kennedy, 1976, p.3). Indeed, oil is utilised here both to re-evaluate the respective economic cases and to reinforce aspects of the contestation of identity noted in Chapter Four. Thus, reacting to McCrone’s claim of the danger of economic retaliation if its economic interests are threatened post-independence, Kennedy reinforces an oppositional placement of Scotland and England and rhetorically prioritising Scotland: “why McCrone and others are so sure that an English government would react in...petty ways...says much for their perception of the depth of inter-British friendship and goodwill” (Kennedy, 1976, p.48).

The next paper in Kennedy (1976), Simpson on ‘Scotland, England and North Sea Oil’, reinforces Kennedy’s implicit argument that the discovery of oil transformed Scottish-English relations. Simpson argues the discovery of oil, in particular, stimulated “the growing interest” of Scotland in political independence, and English resistance which “prior to 1972 could hardly be said to exist” (Kennedy, 1976, p.60). The principle factor in the movement towards self-government seems to be the replacement of a British by a Scottish identity, as in the former British dominions (Kennedy, 1976, p.60). In Scotland this was stalled by “the fear that independence would mean a serious fall in the standard of living...that this fear was wholly without foundation did not make it any the less real” (Kennedy, 1976, p.60). However, “the discovery of oil has virtually abolished this fear, and with it the principle political constraint on the movement towards independence” (Kennedy, 1976, p.60). Nevertheless, it is wrong to suppose that independence is equated with imminent oil wealth. Simpson asserts that many would gratefully trade oil for

independence (Kennedy, 1976, p60). This is clearly intended to deflect the charge of greed and Simpson implies, rather, that greed lies elsewhere as Scottish independence “is principally seen in England in...that the loss of North Sea oil reserves would put in doubt the capacity of the British government to repay, or refinance, the heavy external borrowing of recent years” (Kennedy, 1976, p.60). Oil to these authors, therefore, creates a conflict of interest between Scotland and England. In both Simpson and Kennedy, oil is utilised to polarise the debate, a technique seen in earlier chapters. Particularly, oil is used to reinforce arguments within the contestation over the debate’s identity dynamics as outlined in Chapter Four. Further, an attempt is made to reverse the evaluative polarity of some common arguments against the SNP.

The SLP similarly seeks to use oil to polarise the debate. Vassie argues oil may lead to increased tensions between Scotland and Westminster but rejects the SNP’s ‘inflammatory policies of greed’ on North Sea oil (SLP, No.3, November 1976, p.2). Oil, he argues, is too important to the UK government for Scotland to be given all oil rights, but Scotland is making a disproportionate contribution to the UK treasury if there is no change. As a result the SLP should rally the Scottish people behind ‘sharing’ (SLP, No. 3, November 1976, p.3). Thus, while polarising the debate, the SLP seeks to strategically occupy a rhetorical middle ground position.



**§7. Conclusion: 'Economic Teeth'.**

The economy is often used to reinforce arguments within the evaluative and partisan political debate and this obtains an increasingly central place for the economy in the constitutional discourse. Oil, while it enervates the debate, similarly reinforces the perceived centrality of economics. That the economy is an issue is unsurprising. That this is so much the result of partisan dynamics is more surprising. To the extent that Chapter Three noted some doubts about economic accounts of the debate, these are reinforced. This is not to deny that economic factors were not important. Clearly they were, given the extent of economic focused arguments. However, the uses of economic arguments often reinforce political/partisan arguments already present. The analysis also questions the assessment of the debate as one where the SNP as purely an economic protest movement motivates the debate. Rather, to the extent that the SNP concentrates on economics, this too is at least partly an outcome of partisan interaction. This is not to deny that reasons for SNP support may include economic discontent, but indicates that the relationship between economic cause and the ideological effect of SNP support may not be straightforward. This point is analogous to Dewar's recognition that, while SNP support may at first have been economic, "at some point protest slides into commitment" (MacCormick, 1970, p72).

This is also not to say that the economy has *no* effect on the direction of the debate. As the debate progresses and devolution appears increasingly to be an inevitability, contributors discuss the kind of politics and policies that the reformed structures should encourage including powers that the proposed assembly should have. This aspect of the debate largely

concentrates on economic powers. As the economy is perceived, or at least strategically asserted, as central, a motivating factor for the SNP, and as the assembly is conceptualised as the solution to Scotland's economic problems, then a concentration on the economic powers of that assembly is natural. Such is evident within HMG (1975), which recognises that "[f]inancial arrangements lie at the heart of any scheme" and these must reflect the continued "importance of political and economic unity" (HMG, 1975, p.19). However, the White Paper is careful to justify the limitations on the assembly's economic powers, invoking partisan tropes. It endorses Kilbrandon's suggestion of funding the assembly by a block grant, "taking account both of local needs and of the desirability of some uniformity of standards and contributions in all parts of the United Kingdom" (HMG, 1975, p.19). Alternative policies, such as allowing the assembly to raise revenues, while difficult, would offend against the principle of distribution according to needs. While oil has "given rise to different ideas", the principle that each area should control its own resources "whether its advocates realise this or not - would mean the break-up of the United Kingdom" (HMG, 1975, p.20). Oil must be treated as a UK resource. The limits on the powers to be given are linked to UK unity and SNP critique tropes. Nevertheless, HMG argues, the power to allocate money will make the assembly "a powerful economic as well as social power" (1975, p.21).

The most immediate impact of discontent over the powers that the assembly should have was Sillars's defection from Labour and the establishment of the SLP. While the SLP reflects a dynamic within the debate that is more important in the long term, and examined in Chapter Seven, its immediate impact was heavy media coverage, which highlighted this

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debate over the economic powers of the proposed assembly. While oversight of the SDA was conceded during debates on the devolution bill this did not stop the debate on whether the assembly had “meaningful powers” or “real economic teeth” (NER, 1976, p.23), both frequently used euphemisms for an assembly with stronger economic powers. Thus, Smallwood notes that there are two main critiques of the provisions of HMG (1975): the post-devolution role of the Secretary of State and Parliament’s legislative veto; and economic powers. He argues that a stable assembly’s powers “should be sufficient, and preferably more than sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of the majority of people in Scotland” (NER, 1976, p.22). He notes that this is generally judged to be the case except in the economic sphere, “even by the most sympathetic interpreter” (NER, 1976, p.22). This omission is crucial as “a great deal of the discontent which has given rise to demands for devolution and even for separatism in Scotland is economic in origin” (NER, 1976, p.22). Therefore:

“It will be difficult to represent a new Scottish Assembly without a significant economic role as a relevant response to Scotland’s essential need...[as] a convincing alternative to separatism if Scotland’s relative economic position is worsening just at a time that the revenues from North Sea oil are assuming massive proportions” (NER, 1976, p.23).

Nevertheless, while there is *agreement* on the importance of the assembly’s powers in this area, there is active *disagreement* over what economic powers the assembly should receive. Indeed, such disagreement can be detected even within a document intended to show a

united Labour front. Labour (1976a) clearly and unsurprisingly, given Labour and Trades Union authorship, prioritises economic arguments and as previously noted, seeks to demonstrate unity. Thus, contributions from the Labour and individual Trade Unions repeatedly stress that devolution is “firmly in line with the essential...political and economic unity of the UK” and that “while the Labour movement in Scotland, while speaking with one voice for the vast majority of Scots in demanding a strong Scottish assembly, has also given its pledge to resist any and every effort of the separatists, in whatever guise, to destroy the unity of the UK” (1976a, p.2). Nevertheless, the STUC contribution makes clear that they support “a Scottish Assembly with meaningful powers and the ability to make a significant impact on Scotland’s problems” (1976, p.1). Given the context, the conventional use of this phrase and the participants, ‘meaningful powers’ refers to more economic powers. The concluding paragraph of the STUC statement gives further indication that the Labour movement, despite the intended impression, is not united on which powers the Scottish Assembly should receive. Devolution is portrayed as an advance, but not the end of the process: the assembly should be made to work, although “[i]t is doubtful if the presently agreed allocation of powers between the UK parliament and the Scottish assembly will initially achieve the right balance” (1976, p.1).

Further, arguments over the economic powers of the assembly also interact with the partisan dynamics of the wider debate. Thus, in his opposition to devolution, one of Dalyell’s key concerns is on that body’s proposed economic powers. He argues that the economic effects of devolution, as well as the specific economic powers proposed, make devolution unstable. He argues that it is “unreasonable” to suggest that a ‘more meaningful

use of resources' could be made by a body *without revenue raising powers*: every failure would be blamed on "the parsimony of the English treasury" (1976, p.1). The lack of tax raising powers is particularly problematic, as:

"any organisation that does not have the discipline and responsibility of raising at least some of its own cash is both likely to pass a cluster of fiscally irresponsible resolutions, and in fact become little more than an advisory body, becoming more and more disgruntled, as its members become more and more aware of their own incompetence" (1976, p.3).

However, Dalyell notes that specific suggestions of tax powers have been rejected.<sup>135</sup> He mocks the Scottish Secretary's admitted dissatisfaction with the proposed Block Grant arrangement and, unable to find suitable alternatives, professed gratefulness for suggestions:

"You bet the government would be grateful! After two years of talking about it, if all these keen, clever, pro-devolutionists in the academic world - and devolution is becoming a major academic 'industry' employing more and more lecturers - have not by now come up with an answer to the basic question of how one gives sufficient financial powers to a legislative assembly in a unitary state" (1976, pp.3-4).

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<sup>135</sup> One such rejected tax was a local income tax unique to Scotland which, Dalyell asserts, would engender Scots resentment at paying more as well as having negative effects on business and unemployment (Dalyell, 1976, p.3). Dalyell thus foreshadows the 1990s debate on a 'Tartan Tax'.

There is, he argues, no painless way in a unitary state to combine revenue-raising powers with the maintenance of UK economic integration: “[w]e Scots would get less than at present - Significantly less...Howls of anger would ensue” (1976, p.3). The SNP would argue that ‘we’ weren’t getting ‘our share’ from the “English treasury” and that only it could get more. Thus, devolution would provide “a stadium for nationalism” (1976, p.7). Again Dalyell elides nationalism and devolution and here arguments over the proposed economic powers of the assembly are used to reinforce this elision.

That the economy is used in the way that it is, and over the main partisan division of the debate, has the effect of centralising the economy within the debate. As Chapter Seven demonstrates, the implication of this, and of the partisan debate within which this occurs, is the development of the discourse community. This is, ultimately, more important in the long term for the development of the constitutional debate and Scottish politics more generally.

**The Development of the Discourse Community.**

**§1. Introduction.**

Within the context of the constitutional debate the discourse community is developed. As has been demonstrated, the evaluative debate over nationalism reinforces the central rhetorical division between Labour and the SNP, although establishing tropes that are diffused more broadly and become established within the Scottish societal ideology. Central aspects of Scotland's previously banal nationalism are also reinforced through the debate. The debate is initially perceived as political, and through the partisan debate common concerns on issues of accountability, responsiveness and participation are developed, although partisan divisions crosscut any perceivable evaluative agreement. This chapter outlines how the partisan debate, evaluative debate and the increasingly perceived centrality of the economy outlined in Chapter Six lead to the alignment of class and national identities as a result of strategic attempts to align economic/class interest with party identity. The result is an implicit dialogue between 'socialism' and 'nationalism', with the latter broadly conceived, thus building on the evaluative debate outlined in Chapter Four.<sup>136</sup> Through this dialogue, a concrete set of contributors interact, to the extent of excluding those not part of the discourse community, most notably the Conservatives.

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<sup>136</sup> Nationalism is often used in these sources in this broad but undefined way, consonant with the strategic ambiguity of the evaluative debate. The use of 'nationalism' within this Chapter will reflect its usage within the dialogue by discourse community members. Where a more specific usage is intended, this is highlighted.

This creation of the discourse community is evident in the sources that are the focus of this chapter. Brown (1975) is described by Hassan and Lynch as trying “from a socialist perspective to understand the appeal and rationale of nationalism. Now its message is more in keeping with the longest suicide note in history of the 1983 General Election than with the New Labour gospel of the 1997 government” (2001, pp.78-9). Williamson similarly argues that it signifies the vitality of the Scottish left but remained a “literary exercise” (1979, p.68). The tone of the book is undoubtedly ‘of its time’ but this anthology by socialist authors, including two then SNP supporters, provides an intellectual snapshot of the mid-1970s Scottish left and an explicit and implicit socialist/nationalist dialogue. Kennedy (1976) is a similar collection of papers by SNP supporters, also indicating dialogue explicitly and implicitly. While Kennedy asserts that this collection is not a response to Brown (1976, p.1), it can be read in that vein, given similarities of topics addressed and conventions employed. Explicitly, Kennedy argues that it is “a contribution to the debate that began with the political changes of 1974” (1976, p.2). Indeed, that such collections exist is instructive and illustrative of the development of a discursive community in the latter part of our period. The creation of the SLP, though ultimately unsuccessful, exemplified dialogue between socialism and nationalism and would seem to be its logical outcome. The impact of the SLP within the constitutional discourse was disproportionate to its support, as Sillars recognises: “it was not the electoral effort but the policy-making we attempted within the new party that was decisively influential” (1986, p.86). The SLP publication, *Forward Scotland* (1976-7), demonstrates the party’s character and the manner of its influence, *reinforcing* socialist/nationalist dialogue. Lastly *Q* (1975–1977), *Calgacus* (1975-1976) and *Crann-Tara* (1976-1981) provided public forums



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for this dialogue. Their existence, although short lived, demonstrates a perceived need for forums to debate for socialists and nationalists and a broad commonality of concerns, contributors, assumptions and language. Lastly, partisan sources utilised in earlier chapters reinforce that this dialogue is not epiphenomenal but builds on and is diffused within the dynamics of the wider debate.

A commonality of contributors across these sources demonstrates the interaction of a discrete set of interlocutors. Both *Calgacus* (No. 2, Summer, 1975, p.49) and *Crann-Tara* (No.1, Winter 1975, pp.14-15) favourably review Brown (1975); and *Calgacus* explicitly notes an overlap with Brown (1975) of views and contributors. The crossover between *Q* and Kennedy (1976) is unsurprising as Kennedy (1976) originated from *Q*, for which all Kennedy's contributors write. Kennedy writes in *Crann-Tara* (No.1, Winter 1977, p.5); Brown writes in *Q* (January 1976; March 1976). Owen Dudley Edwards contributes to Brown (1975), Kennedy (1976) and is a frequent contributor to *Q*; Sillars contributes to Brown (1975), *Q* (December 1975) and *Crann-Tara* (No.1, Winter 1977), as well as *Forward Scotland* (SLP, 1976-7); Burnett edits *Calgacus* as well as contributing to Brown (1975); *Calgacus's* editorial board included McGrath as well as Nairn and Hamish Henderson, who would join the SLP (Williamson, 1979, p.74). Nairn contributes to *Q* (July, 1976; 17<sup>th</sup> December 1976), Brown (1975) and contributes regularly to *NER*. Nairn (1977) is given a favourable review in *Q* by Stephen Maxwell (24<sup>th</sup> June 1977), a frequent contributor to *Q*, as well as in *Crann-Tara* by Gibson (No.1, Winter 1977, pp.14-15) who

also writes in *Calgacus*.<sup>137</sup> Ian Bayne is a frequent contributor to *Q* and *Crann-Tara*. Drucker contributes to *Q* (November 1975) and edits a special edition of *NER* devoted to *Our Changing Democracy* (*NER*, No. 31, 1976). Other notable contributors to this discourse community include Christopher Harvie (*Q*, April 1976; Brown & Harvie, 1979), Neal Ascherson (*Q*, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1975, SLP, No.3, November 1976) and George Reid (*Q*, February 1976). Other figures from the constitutional debate contribute to these sources, for example JP Mackintosh (*Q*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1977; *NER*, No. 31, 1976) and Malcolm Rifkind (*Q*, November 1975) although less frequently than those referenced above, and it is debatable to what extent they are part of this discourse community. Nevertheless, they also indicate to what extent this was an open and evolving discourse.

To claim that the development of the discourse community can be observed through these sources is not to suggest that they share exactly the same views, but rather a commonality of figures, concerns, audience and reference. These are not dominant voices within the constitutional debate as a whole, although certainly Brown (1975) is widely referenced. The magazines are likely to have had relatively small readerships: Williamson, indeed, asserts that *Calgacus* “became almost an object lesson in irrelevance” (1979, p.75). Certainly the magazines survived for a relatively short period.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, Williamson argues, in relation to one of these sources, “[t]he composition of *Calgacus* demonstrated, as...[Brown (1975)] did a few years earlier, that among some sections of the left at least

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<sup>137</sup> There is also a crossover in these magazines sources of advertising. For example, the 7:84 theatre-company and *The Cheviot* by McGrath, contributor to Brown (1975) and member of *Calgacus*’s editorial board, are advertised in *Q* and *Crann-Tara*.

<sup>138</sup> The exception is *Crann-Tara*, which became *Radical Scotland* from 1982.

the will, if not the means, existed to examine the specifics of Scottish life” (1979, p.75).

Through these sources the development of the discourse community can be traced.

### **§2. Working Class Scotland: Class, Nation (and Party).**

Given the centrality of the Labour/SNP rhetorical division within the constitutional debate and the increasing centrality of the economy it is unsurprising that there is an explicit concentration on the ‘working class’, and that much of this discourse makes assumptions about the socialist inclinations of that working class. Indeed, so heavily was this the case that, to the extent that the conventions developed are diffused, this discourse establishes a broadly left wing and working class perception of Scottish national identity. The idea of a strong Scottish working class community is not new. ‘Red Clydeside’ mythology aside, Kellas’s assertion of a powerful “proletarian’ culture” (1968, p.12) was noted in Chapter Four. That Labour/SNP competition is perceived as over the same group of voters is evident in McCrone’s assertion that most SNP votes are from disillusioned Labour voters.<sup>139</sup> As partisan battles over the same constituency become central, attempts to elide national and party identities, as outlined in Chapter Four, are combined with attempts to elide these with the perceived working class identity of this contested constituency, creating and reinforcing a perception of Scotland *as* working class.

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<sup>139</sup> See Chapter Six, p.278.

Milligan provides an early example, describing SNP attempts to expand from a narrow base, “at variance with the proud national feeling...inherent in the Scottish People”, as a move from middle-class leadership which “vacillated in a theoretical dream touching only the surface of the Scottish people and even then only those whom they considered worthy of the cause” (Scottish Council, January 1967, p.63). This leadership, he recognises, has been replaced by young politicians who have overhauled party organisation and propaganda to appeal increasingly to the working class. Implicitly, the ‘working class’ are the repositories of national identity. Other contributions across this main partisan rhetorical division make the same point, but more subtly, for example describing Scotland as economically disadvantaged, and therefore making an association of national and class position. Labour describes Scotland as having ‘many’ deep economic and social problems which are “persistent hangovers from the industrial revolution and the Highland Clearances and are probably greater than any other nation in the industrialised world has inherited from the industrial revolution” (1970, p.3); while Brown and Harvie assert that “Scotland has still more extensive social problems than England”, despite higher expenditure (1979, p.10). Making the connection more directly, JP Mackintosh argues that Scotland has “more than its fair share of those problems which normally bring left wing governments to power and...only left wing governments can solve. The class system is more evident and more ingrained in Scotland” (1976, p.6).

Such arguments are also strategically used. For example, in response to the SNP ‘myth’ that **“Westminster Governments have been responsible for Scotland’s poor economic performance”**, Labour asserts that rather these problems are due to **“[t]he failure of the**

**Scottish Private Sector of Industry**” (1976b, p.2). While the SNP exploits these problems, Labour seeks solutions through regional policies: such large-scale problems require UK solutions (1976c, p.3). Labour, as well as eliding party and nation, elides these with class identity: behind the ‘tartan tinted smokescreens’ the ‘freedom’ offered by the SNP is that **“to sign the dole!”** (1969a, p.15) While acceptable nationalism is identified as coinciding with the class interest of Labour voters, this is also elided with Scottish interest so that national, class and party identities are absolutely identified. The SNP, in contrast, is criticised as unable to represent the working class “because they cannot afford detailed policy. Such policy would alienate some sections of their support and split them asunder” (Labour, 1977a, p.1). SNP policies “where they exist are, by necessity, bland and superficial. A nationalist movement to attract support must span the whole political spectrum” (1977a, p.5). Labour asserts that the SNP are fond of denying that they are a party of left or right as opposed to ‘Scotland’s interest’ but when “forced” to produce policies, “cracks appear” (1977b, p.1).<sup>140</sup> Further, risking UK economic unity “would put at risk the jobs and futures of thousands of Scots” (1978, p.2). Making the class association more explicit, it is asserted that the SNP’s “ultimate objective is to set worker against worker and inflict on those who are Scots a future they do not want. We and the majority of Scots must unite to ensure that their objective remains unrealised” (1978, p.2).

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<sup>140</sup> Attention is drawn to MacDonald and Reid being ‘rebuffed’ by SNP Parliamentary Leader Donald Stewart for calling the SNP ‘social democratic’. The SNP has some ‘right wing’ policies and “Messrs Henderson, Crawford, Watt and Ewing [‘right wing’ MPs] are firmly in control” (Labour, 1977a, p.2).

It is not only Labour that concentrates on the 'working class' or seeks to elide national and working class identities. This link is asserted even more strongly by the SNP's Isobel Lindsay:

"If there is something of a class stereotype in the attitudes of the Scots to the English, then it is because the Scots as a nation - middle as well as working class - have experienced something akin to what the lower classes experience as a sub-group in a larger society. Our language or dialect was rejected as inferior and the centres of power and influence increasingly moved out-with the country" (Kennedy, 1976, p.23).

As a result, "Scotland was the poor relation, the dependant, the small and the weak partner. The cumulative effect of this has been to produce in the Scots a sense of being "a failed action" (Kennedy, 1976, p.23).

While Kennedy (1976) states it is not a reply to Brown (1975), the two do represent a dialogue, and Kennedy's contributors are aware of Brown. Assertions similar to Lindsay's are found within Brown (1975). Thus, Foster, whose *retrospective* account of the constitutional debate was referenced in Chapter Three, argues in Brown (1975) that Scottish culture is working class, and broadly left wing, through an account of the historical relationship between capitalism and the 'Scottish nation'. He asserts that to what extent Scotland had a "bourgeois revolution", and whether capitalism was an "**alien** imposition", determines the role of Scottish culture in "the resulting class struggles"

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(Brown, 1975, p.143). Foster argues that while capitalism was not entirely alien, although externally dependent, Scottish capitalism has laterally moved progressively away from its national base (Brown, 1975, p.150): “it is not mere rhetoric”, he argues, to claim that the Scottish working class have created a separate culture and, in an age when “Scottish bourgeois culture only exists in a totally ersatz form”, the working class is “the one living Scots culture” (Brown, 1975, p.150). Burnett offers a caveat: while Scotland has massive inequalities, these exist throughout Britain as a corollary of British capitalism. Nevertheless, Scotland’s problems:

“are consequences not of the **British** economy but of the British **capitalist** economy...not to deny today that Scotland suffers greatly from the fact that it is British capitalism which is in a crisis and that the peculiar nature of the Scottish economy as a branch and subsidiary economy makes it particularly vulnerable” (Brown, 1975, p.111).

The SNP, Burnett asserts, believes independence will release industrial vigour but this is already operating according to the profit motive, which does not recognise national borders, and is capitalism’s “ultimate aim and all other considerations will...be subordinate, including the grandiose dream held out by the SNP” (Brown, 1975, p.112).

McGrath also asserts the working class Scotland trope: ‘separatism’ is an issue due to ‘ever-present’ resentment against “the traditional enemy, which for centuries has dominated Scotland economically, politically, culturally, socially, to the point, it seems to

some, of colonial oppression, but without destroying the integrity of Scotland as a nation” (Brown, 1975, p.136). This has created an “‘English’ ideology” oriented Scottish middle-class that “crushed and distorted indigenous Scottish culture...to the ultimate advantage of English capital”, while becoming “full partners with the English bourgeois, both in overseas exploitation and in exploiting its own working class at home” (Brown, 1975, p.136). He asserts, indeed, the strength of this class-nation: “[s]ections of that working class are highly politicised, articulate and have a breadth of vision beyond their immediate demands which should make the ‘intellectuals’ of Scotland hang their heads in shame” (Brown, 1975, p.138). Although “social climbing ambitions” affect others:

“in spite of this, class solidarity and a high awareness of class interest and their own oppression, together with a refusal to be muzzled, make the Scottish working class one of the strongest in Europe, with a considerable experience of strength and great maturity as a result” (Brown, 1975, p.138).

Ferry, similarly, argues that the Scottish working class is particularly advanced, referencing Red Clydeside in support (Brown, 1975, p.98). *Calgacus*, while not directly asserting equivalence of class and nation, asserts the need to recognise a distinctive Scottish working class experience, referencing the historian EP Thompson’s self-limitation to the history of the *English* working class because “[t]he Scottish story is so significantly different” and as “class is as much a cultural as an economic formation” (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). The “assumption that the pattern and structure of power as it exists in England is identically mirrored in Scotland” is not true, “[n]or is the class nature of the



state the same in Scottish society” as in England (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). In *Q*, a more direct equivalence of class and nation is found in an article criticising Adam Ferguson, a leading figure in the ‘Scotland is British’ and later 1979 referendum ‘Scotland says no’ campaigns: “to such people, devolution represents an obvious threat...Many of them...identify so closely with the English upper middle-class that Scottish self-government constitutes a challenge to their self-regard” (*Q*, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1976, p.2). Class/national association is reinforced by dismissing Ferguson’s knowledge of Scotland as limited to “quick visits to his ancestral estates in Ayrshire” (*Q*, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1976, p.2). Maxwell explains this association, and a tendency to racial stereotyping of the English in Scotland as the result of the fact that most Englishmen in Scotland *are* middle class (*Q*, October, 1976, p.3). A more crude association can be seen in the title of *Crann-Tara* article, “English-ridden, Capitalist-ridden, landlord-ridden Scotland’ (No.4, Autumn 1978, pp.14-5), associating the English, capitalists and landlords. This also references Scottish socialism: the title is what Red Clydesider James Maxton said he would transform into a “Scottish socialist commonwealth” (*Crann-Tara*, Autumn 1978, p.15). Easton reinforces this class/nation association and its link to Scottish/English distinctiveness: “the *idée-fixe*” of the English that Scotland “should be subordinate to southern authority, dictated the course of northern history and stamped a fugitive paranoia on the northern character” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1 Winter 1977, p.12).

### §3. Socialist Scotland.

This conception of working class Scotland, or at least a strong, distinctive Scottish proletarian culture, is found in Brown (1975), Kennedy (1976), *Q, Calgacus* and *Crann-Tara*, and partisan debate over working class voters is observable within partisan documents, upon which this association builds. That Scotland is socialist or at least broadly left wing is assumed, often implicitly, to follow from the conceptualisation of working class Scotland. A common conception of Scotland as working class and socialist in the partisan Labour/SNP battle can be seen in a debate over the rhetorical ownership of 'socialism'. 'Socialists' traditionally oppose 'nationalism', in any form, as bourgeois and inherently opposed to working class interests. Such criticisms of the SNP are common. Thus, Milligan demonstrates a conceptual engagement between socialism and nationalism interacting with such partisan considerations: while he recognises positive SNP developments he argues that the risk of fragmenting the Labour movement should be avoided (*Scottish Council*, January 1967, p.63). The typical response of some SNP supporters to such criticisms is to assert socialist and/or working class credentials.<sup>141</sup> Thus, an association between class, ideology and nation is assumed, asserted and strengthened, even where partisan distinctions are reinforced.

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<sup>141</sup> There is a distinction between the official SNP position and that of some supporters. As the differences over McDonald and Reid's descriptions of the SNP as 'social democratic' indicate, there were different SNP views about whether to take a firm position on the left-right political spectrum. This represents historical divisions within the 'nationalist movement' over whether to appeal to the electorate on a national or sectional basis (see Mitchell, 1996a).

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Labour appeals to socialism are unsurprising. Chapter Four illustrated Labour arguments that devolution would harm more important socialist objectives and later that devolution was consistent with socialism. Dalyell (1976) also makes strategic appeals to Labour voters, alleging the SNP's inconsistent commitment to socialism: noting that Ewing at Hamilton declared herself a 'better socialist' than Labour but does not make such assertions as MP for (more conservative) Moray and Nairn after 1974 (1979, p.57), and referencing 'Red Clydesider' MPs, with positive connotations for the Scottish left, in support of his anti-devolution case.<sup>142</sup> JP Mackintosh goes further: "those who are democrats and are left of centre in British politics should support the creation of a Scottish parliament" because post-war, "with the possible exception of 1955-59", Scotland has had a consistent Labour majority (1976, p.3), due to its economic problems. As a corollary of Scotland's deep economic problems and strong class system, Scotland is asserted to be more left wing. Unsurprisingly, Labour believes a large socialist constituency exists. MacDonald and Reid's description of the SNP as 'social democratic' indicates some consideration of ideologically repositioning the SNP as more 'left wing'. Indeed, Reid asserts that independence is "the last chance for social democracy in the British Isles" (SNP Press Release, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1978). Consideration of a more left wing SNP is also evident in Kennedy (1976). Kennedy asserts the importance of the SNP winning 'socialist' votes:

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<sup>142</sup> Dalyell references discussions with two 'Red Clydeside' MPs: Emanuel Shinwell, who admitted to Dalyell that the Clydesiders called for devolution knowing it would not occur and would have been "horrified" if wrong; and John Wheatley, the "most hard headed" Clydesider, and the only one with ministerial responsibility (and hence, by implication, more authoritative), who "had no truck" with devolution (Dalyell, 1977, p.67).

“It would be an error to claim that Scots are a Socialist electorate. The political power of the Labour party rests on a minority of the voters and is heavily concentrated in West Central Scotland. But it would be an greater error to think that Labour and socialism are unimportant to Scotland” (1975, p.1).

This is for a practical reason learnt from the 1974 elections: that the SNP cannot win independence without winning Labour seats. However, he also implicitly claims the SNP to be the logical alternative for Labour voters. Maxwell (in Kennedy, 1976) provides a thoughtful discussion of ‘social democracy’, noting the common SNP belief that the party should be above ideology, dissolving upon independence, and represent “a distinctive Scottish way in politics” drawing on “the myth of Scottish democracy” conceptualised as “rejecting class theories of politics”, being “anti-bureaucratic and egalitarian with strong populist overtones” and emphasising “local and community identity...In recent years this has been mixed, rather uncertainly, with more fashionable ideas of decentralisation” (Kennedy, 1976, p.7). However, Maxwell argues that electoral success and the prospect of governmental responsibility requires a political position, noting the ‘social democratic’ self-description of SNP spokespersons and the SNP’s 1974 October manifesto in support. Maxwell suggests this label proved acceptable partly due to social democracy’s rejection of socialist and *laissez-faire* ideological extremes, and therefore some consistency with the non-ideological tradition, as well as its “PR gloss of moderation and even conservatism” convenient to a party proposing major constitutional upheaval (Kennedy, 1976, p.8).

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Maxwell is not here arguing *for* social democracy, however, but its examination and the proposal of further ideological reorientation. Social democracy is implicitly criticised as not being *sufficiently* socialist, having watered down socialist aims, supporting means to achieving socialist ends which are ineffective, and having little interest in alternatives to state-corporatism with bureaucracy and centralisation being its “dominant political feature” (Kennedy, 1976, p.9), this latter linking this argument to a trope of the democratic debate. Maxwell argues that it is ironic for the SNP to adopt social democracy when an assessment of Scotland’s problems shows social democracy to be unreliable to deal with Scotland’s over-dependence on declining industries, inadequate levels of investment and high foreign business ownership. Independence alone, Maxwell asserts, will not solve these but social democracy accepts much state economic intervention, while Scotland’s long-term economic prospects cannot be assured with the current level of external control. If the government took a share of existing foreign industry (for example oil revenues) there could be a swing towards further state domination of industry (Kennedy, 1976, p.13). Social democracy, Maxwell argues, is therefore inappropriate in Scotland, and challenges SNP commitments to decentralisation. Maxwell thus critiques social democracy but in a way that recommends a more coherent left wing stance.

The SLP seeks to occupy a middle position between the SNP and Labour, thus simultaneously polarising and bridging the debate’s main partisan division, as Chapter Six noted with regard to oil. It evokes and reinforces the notion of working class socialist Scotland and engages in the debate over the ownership of socialism. As Drucker notes, the SLP inaugural press conference proclaimed that the SLP was “Socialist with a capital S

and Scottish with a capital S" (1978, p.10), the two linked by conceptualising Scotland as socialist. Throughout *Forward Scotland* (SLP, 1976-7) there is an attempt to associate class interests with the Scottish nation and interpret those interests as the achievement of socialism, associated with the SLP. The SLP's first policy document, 'Jobs and Industry: a Policy for full employment' reinforces the centrality of the economy and class interests to the SLP, asserting that 'exploitation' is not due to Westminster/Whitehall malice but "the single necessity of Scottish economic needs being subservient to English" needs: "[h]ow can Britain's branch factory economically sustain Scotland's?" (SLP, No.1, July 1976, p.4) The only effective economic policy for Scotland is "economic self-management - under a Scottish socialist government pledged to expand and diversify industry by handling capital firmly" (SLP, No.1, July 1976, p.4). Thus, 'Scotland' is a victim of 'exploitation'; all Scotland suffers from the economic problems outlined, combining class and national interest, and the socialist solutions required are associated with the SLP. Both the SLP party name, the colloquial name of Labour in Scotland and of Keir Hardie's original party, and the title, 'Forward Scotland', of the party publication identify the SLP with Scottish socialist tradition: *Forward!* had been a socialist magazine edited by Tom Johnston, the highly respected Labour Scottish Secretary during Churchill's wartime coalition. Adding the national modifier emphasises the Scottishness of the party's socialism. Such uses of Scottish socialist history to assert socialist credentials are also found elsewhere. Thus, *Crann-Tara* frequently reprints articles from Johnston's *Forward*, including by Keir Hardie (who also appears the front cover of No.4, Autumn 1978). Through such evocations both Scottish and socialist credentials are asserted simultaneously, while an association of Scotland and socialism is reinforced.

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John Robertson uses history to reinforce SLP socialism in contrast to Labour. Labour ‘cuts’ are the “infamous Geddes axe of the 1920s...the McDonald sell out of the 1930s...The Cripps measures...classical opportunist measures for dealing with a capitalist crisis and...the antithesis of every concept of socialism. What Labour was born to prevent” (SLP, No.2, September 1976, p.1). Similarly, the SLP asserts that:

“A crisis in capitalism calls for an advance in socialism - this is obvious, but not to the Labour cabinet. They have never understood the purposes of socialism. Faced with capitalism in peril, their first instinct is to shore up, not to change...British Labour leaders, political and industrial, are failing to privilege the superior ethics, economic planning and priorities of Socialism” (SLP, No.1, July 1976, p.1).

Labour has opted for “timeless Tory solutions” (SLP, No.1, July 1976, p.1). Use of socialist language, direct criticism of Labour, evaluatively biased descriptions of past Labour actions and the association of Labour with the class enemy of Scotland - the ‘Tories’ – imply the SLP rather than Labour as the true heirs of Scottish socialism. This is also clearly *Scottish* socialism. Thus the term ‘British Labour Party’ (BLP) is used, to emphasis SLP Scottishness in contrast; alternatively the ‘Old Labour Party’ (OLP) is often referenced, by implication opposed to the ‘new’ SLP. Explicit contrasts between Scottish conditions and elsewhere are also made. Thus, while the government resists imposing a ‘wealth tax’, “London is as gay and lush as ever. Diners at the Dorchester can belch discreetly, satisfied that Healey will not hurt” (SLP, July 1976, No. 1, p.1). This reinforces the association of class, nation, and party. ‘London’ is used figuratively to mobilise class

and national stereotypes of metropolitan, English, bourgeois elites and associate these with Labour. Associations of the SLP and socialism and criticisms of Labour as insufficiently socialist are constantly reinforced by the SLP.

#### **§4. Class Analyses.**

Given this conception of working class socialist Scotland, a number of analyses of the debate and Scottish/English relations within this discourse community are conducted in class terms. Thus, a number of contributors to Brown (1975) deploy straightforward class analyses against the SNP, although the opposition to 'nationalism' is challenged through the book's implicit dialogue between socialism and nationalism. A traditional class based analysis is offered by Smith, who evaluates "the ruling class strategy" that accounts for the SNP (Brown, 1975, p.187) as either a split in the British ruling class or a "tactical line of defence" (Brown, 1975, p.188); while Gow argues that the debate should be seen in the context of contemporary 'crises of capitalism' - the SNP would continue "the brutal incompetence of bourgeois institutions, their calculated hostility to the working class" (Brown, 1975, p.62), and independence would mean "exchanging one set of capitalist rulers for another more local set" (Brown, 1975, p.66).

Not all class analyses are so oppositional. Two academic discussions merit attention both in their own right and in relation to their contemporary influence. Hechter (1999) was influential from the 1975 publication of its first edition, as can be seen from references to Hechter's thesis within discourse documents. Hechter posits that the UK's 'Celtic' nations



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are subject to English 'internal colonialism', a "dependant kind of development which limited their economic welfare and threatened their cultural identity" (1999, p.xiv). This is due to lack of sovereignty and the continuing salience of ethnic characterisations in centre-periphery relations leading to a 'cultural division of labour' whereby economic divisions were superimposed upon cultural differences. He recognises that this is less applicable to Scotland than Wales or Ireland, but his theory is referenced within the debate and can be seen to support the elisions of class and nation and the use of class analysis to understand Scottish/English relations. Nairn (Brown, 1975; Nairn, 1977) criticises Hechter's reliance on too abstract a model and offers a more nuanced analysis of Scottish nationalism, and nationalism more generally, that has both direct influence within the debate and considerable academic influence.

Referencing MacDiarmid's claim that Scotland had not developed a 'classical' nationalist movement for independence in the nineteenth century as "no comprehensive-enough agency has emerged", Nairn argues this has changed due to "the petroleum business; the largest, richest, most aggressive and most international form of capitalism in the world" (Brown, 1975, p.22). The resulting 'new Scottish separatism' is "in certain respects...unique...Nowhere else have the essential forces at work displayed their nature so nakedly" (Brown, 1975, p.23). This 'separatism' is different from classical or anti-colonial nationalism, although "analogous to old-style nationalism, above all in its ideology" (Brown, 1975, p.23). Rather it is 'neo-nationalism', occupying a "different place in history and...[a] different character and potential" (Brown, 1975, p.23). Classical nationalism was the "forced reaction" of areas of 'absolute deprivation' to uneven

capitalism (Brown, 1975, p.23); neo-nationalism occurs much later “in the same general process. It remains...a forced by-product of the grotesquely uneven nature of capitalist development”, but occurs in areas of relative, not absolute, deprivation (Brown, 1975, p.23). Nairn argues that oil’s impact has created a developmental difference, which has stimulated neo-nationalism in Scotland.

This is linked to the peculiarities of Scotland’s institutional nationalism, which invokes tropes of the debate, and more specifically, provides a theoretical underpinning for the discourse community. Nairn notes the Union, “a peculiarly patrician bargain between two ruling classes”, resulted in the loss of statehood but retention of “an extraordinary amount of the institutional and psychological baggage normally associated with independence” (Brown, 1975, p.24). Although this left a legacy of “sub national ‘neuroses’”, it posed no political problems as, with imperial expansion, “the Scottish ruling order found that it had given up statehood for a hugely profitable junior partnership in the new Rome” (Brown, 1975, p.24). There was a class character to Scotland’s unusual incorporation within the UK state and it was only the “most restricted ‘upper crust’” that embraced Union (Brown, 1975, p.27). The success of Empire supported this unusual state form and its tolerance of regional elite autonomy, negating the need for the bourgeois to mobilise the proletariat through nationalism or create an extensive bureaucratic system of control. The result was a reliance on informality, although:

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“rule from above was stronger for being informal...not weaker, peace was paid for by...the loss of any aggressive egalitarianism of spirit...‘knowing one’s place’ and quietism towards the state...it depended on and fostered this working class apathy...Labourism merely occupied the terrain of this passivity” (Nairn, 1977, p.68).

Scotland was lucky enough to be ‘taken over’ by the first successful post-absolutist ‘prototype-modern’ bourgeois state and, because this was the first, it was gradual and decentralised, as opposed to successors, forced to modernise more competitively and through central direction (Brown, 1975, p.28). Free from these “normal tensions of uneven development”, and the normal choice of assimilation or nationalism, the post-1707 UK state permitted localised evolution (Brown, 1975, p.28).<sup>143</sup> While institutional and cultural ‘differentia’ persisted, the Scottish middle-class was never forced to mobilise these or the social classes beneath them. Therefore, until now, “[t]he usual ‘raw material’ of nationalism remained in Scotland latent and unexploited” (Brown, 1975, p.30). The result, Nairn argues, was ‘cultural sub-nationalism’, a non-political neurotic culturalism exemplified in Kailyard literature and ‘tartanry’ (Brown, 1975, p.42). However, oil provided a new material basis for Scotland, changing the developmental relations in the context of British decline and “the curious quasi-natal legacy of North Britain, which is being reanimated by a new kind of separatism” provided the foundation for change (Brown, 1975, p.25).

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<sup>143</sup> This was not due to benevolence, Nairn argues, as Ireland and the Highlands, ‘incompatible’ social formations, demonstrate (Brown, 1975, p.28). Rather, Lowland Scots, “[t]hrough the peculiar circumstances of the Union and their own astonishing self-development...were able to establish a singular subordinate position inside the still relatively ‘open’ and expanding system of English capitalism” (Brown, 1975, p.28).

Nairn provides a means of understanding the relationship of class and nationalism, which is influential, not least upon his fellow contributors to Brown (1975). The influence of Brown (1975) within the constitutional discourse ensures a wider audience, as does the mutual implication of the sources central to the discourse community. 'Nationalism', classically the mobilisation of the working class by the intelligentsia under conditions of developmental difference, can be understood in class terms through this analysis. However, the implications of Nairn's analysis are interpreted for diverse ends, even by fellow Brown contributors, as will be shown.

In his explanation of how Scotland dealt with this unique situation, the importance of class is implicitly reinforced: for example, Walter Scott taught Scotland how to "separate the head from the heart" but said nothing about "modern Scotland, in the sense of working class Scotland" (Brown, 1975, p.33). Importantly, unlike traditional class analyses, Nairn does not dismiss nationalism. Indeed, he argues that part of the 'decline' of the British polity, which is the other side of the developmental difference created by the discovery of oil, is the failure of socialism. Socialism, Nairn argues, will have to deal with nationalism (Brown, 1975, p.47). He both exemplifies and impels a more nuanced discussion of nationalism on the Scottish left, providing a theoretical basis for the linkage of socialism and nationalism developed within this discourse community.

**§5. Socialism and Nationalism in Dialogue.**

Kennedy asserts a strategic argument for the necessity of the SNP winning Labour seats and that the SNP threaten Labour's majority: "[t]hus, the central political struggle in Scotland is now between Labour and the SNP" (Kennedy, 1976, p.1). This interpretation is strategically advantageous and bolstered throughout Kennedy (1976): reinforced by the 'inevitability' trope, it defines the debate as between two parties committed to constitutional change, while consistently prioritising the SNP as principled versus Labour as opportunistically reacting to the SNP. This also implies that while the debate is partisan, the debate does *not* reflect a socialist/nationalist divide. The tone of the collection is left wing and privileges ideological dialogue: indeed Edwards's essay 'Socialism or Nationalism?' concludes the collection explicitly asserting commonality. Further, Kennedy explains Brown (1975) in a way that asserts socialism and nationalism are compatible: Brown (1975) is evidence of socialists in Labour seeking to explain the contradiction of opposing Scottish nationalism while supporting oppressed nations abroad. Kennedy, indeed, notes a number of Brown's contributors have since "logically shifted to the Scottish dimension" (Kennedy, 1976, p.3). While this is a partisan evaluation, it also consciously asserts the compatibility of socialism and nationalism, and indeed a natural development from one to the other.

While Kennedy's is a biased description of Brown (1975), dialogue between socialism and nationalism is evident in Brown, as Brown's socialists seek to understand nationalism. Brown (1975), as does Kennedy (1976), includes a complex of partisan dynamics and

ideological engagement. Thus, Brown outlines 'The Socialist Challenge' (Brown, 1975, p.7), making clear the ideological orientation of the collection. It is immediately clear this challenge is one that faces socialists, rather than being posed by them. Brown notes the "irresistible march of recent events" places Scotland at a "turning point" not of "our own choosing" but requiring a decision (1975, p.7). Nationalism and the constitutional debate, however, are placed in the context of a "mushrooming of industrial action" and a growing gap between living conditions and legitimate aspirations (Brown, 1975, p.7): the challenge includes but is not limited to responding to the SNP. Indeed Brown notes the partisan debate "ushered in by" Kilbrandon (1973a), "North Sea Oil and Britain's economic crisis" does not adequately deal with these broader issues, "dominated as it is by electoral calculations, nationalist and anti-nationalist passions and crude bribery" (1975, p.7). While Kilbrandon identified "a feeling of powerlessness at the we/they relationship", the "basic questions" are "who shall exercise power and control the lives of our people" and which social structure allows self-management and economic planning (Brown, 1975, p.7).

The perception of economic motivation, and an appeal for "a new commitment to socialist ideals" and economic planning is evident (Brown, 1975, p.8). However, also evident is an ambivalent relationship to nationalism. The papers seek, Brown tells us, "to transcend that false and sterile antithesis which has been manufactured" between SNP nationalism and Unionist anti-nationalism "by concentrating on the fundamental realities of inequalities and irresponsible Social control of private power and an inadequate democracy. For when the question of freedom for Scotland is resolved, we must ask: freedom for whom? From what? For what?" (Brown, 1975, p.8) This opposes, while implicitly invoking, traditional

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socialist critiques of nationalism. Brown identifies two themes in the collection. Firstly, that Scotland's problems arise not from national oppression or London mismanagement, although "we have had our share of both", but the "uneven and uncontrolled development of capitalism" and government failures: "[t]hus we cannot hope to solve such problems merely by recovering a lost independence or...inserting another tier of government: what is required is planned control of our economy and a transformation of democracy at all levels" (1975, p.8). The second theme is that "the *real* resources of Scotland are not the reserves of oil...nor the ingenuity of native entrepreneurs...but the collective energies and potential of our people whose...capacities have been stultified" by capitalism, accounting for "working people's frustration with and refusal to accept...lack of control over blind social forces which determine their lives" (Brown, 1975, p.8). The relevant population is 'working people', an SNP focus on oil is implicitly critiqued, and it is implicitly argued that 'nationalism' (the SNP variant) is a diversion from 'real' issues. This last is also stated explicitly: while Brown recognises that some contributors see prospects for socialist/nationalist co-operation, he opposes this, as the SNP "has brought the professional and managerial classes back into politics en bloc for the first time since the liberal decline" (1975, p.18).

The rise of the SNP is not only explained by economic factors but by the failure of socialism. Previously a "moral imperative, about social control (and not merely state control or more or less equality)", socialism has come to mean "little more than a scheme for compensating the least fortunate in an unequal society" (Brown, 1975, p.8). This is similar to Maxwell's later critique of 'social democracy' as inadequate in the achievement

of socialist ends, as well as Nairn's assessment. In consequence, modern Scottish nationalism "is less an assertion of Scottish permanence as a nation, than a response to Scotland's uneven development...the gap between people's experiences as part of an increasingly demoralised Great Britain and their (oil fired) expectations at a Scottish level" (Brown, 1975, p.8). Brown, therefore, endorses Nairn's analysis and, although he locates SNP nationalism in a wider context, and references traditional opposition to nationalism, his ambivalence on the appropriate relationship of socialists to nationalism is evident. To Brown, discontent is the result of failure to achieve socialism (Brown, 1975, p.8). Nevertheless, "[f]or the first time since the Union, oil and the political response to it has swung the balance of influence within Great Britain in favour of Scotland, giving the Scottish labour movement in particular a new bargaining power" (1975, p.8). This can be used to 'deflect' discontent, "resisting the pressure for change until it becomes inevitable" (Brown, 1975, p.8) and risking SNP success, or to harness "wide ranging dissatisfaction in a socialist strategy" (Brown, 1975, p.8). Further, Brown argues that while Scottish socialists cannot support an independence that postpones meeting Scotland's needs, nor can they unconditionally support UK integration without guarantees of radical change. The issue is "democracy - how working people in Scotland can increase the control they have over the decisions which shape their lives and the wealth they alone produce" (Brown, 1975, p.9): an assembly offers a "real opportunity...to force the pace to socialism in Britain", and reinvent the Scottish Labour movement (Brown, 1975, p.19).



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Burnett also explicitly rejects the SNP but his title, 'Socialism and the SNP', is instructive (Brown, 1975). Burnett argues socialists should not support the *SNP* in "the basic...struggle for socialism" (Brown, 1975, p.109) but does not assert incompatibility between socialism and *nationalism* as such. Burnett asserts that the SNP "have no exclusive claim to a concern for Scotland. I too would like to see Scotland free - the question is free from what?" (Brown, 1975, p.109) He recognises that the SNP contains an unknown number of activists who see it as the way to a socialist Scotland because they oppose conservatism and "because [of] the Labour party whose dominance of Scottish politics has long been the single biggest guarantor of the maintenance of the political status quo" (Brown, 1975, p.108), the failure of "reformist social democratic policies" to stop capitalist exploitation of Scotland and because:

"the SNP with its simple focusing device [of] 'London rule' gives...to them, a more clearly defined...image of the obstacle...to social justice and the way it can be removed. Even if it does not completely work, some change...they would argue, is better than stagnation" (Brown, 1975, p.108).

Burnett is unsurprised, noting that his criticisms of the SNP can be applied equally to Labour, the "biggest obstacle to the advancement of socialism in this country", and "even to a lesser extent to the communist party" (Brown, 1975, 109). However, to the SNP "the political aspect of their total programme far outweighs any other...as it should...for a party whose first aspiration is 'self-government for Scotland'" (Brown, 1975, 109). Scotland's problem are the result of capitalism but the SNP see no fault with the system merely its

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London mismanagement. The SNP is not socialist, many SNP leaders oppose socialism and “they deny the **fact** of great disparities in power and influence between different social groups” (Brown, 1975, p.112). Thus, to be a socialist SNP member is contradictory, “self-deception or...a shift to a non-socialist position” (Brown, 1975, 109). The SNP suggest present failings result from geographical remoteness and “oil will lubricate the smooth workings of our democratic institutions” (Brown, 1975, p.113). However, to tackle the “dominant elite” requires acknowledging their power and “axiomatic tendency” to act against the mass of people’s interests; in contrast, the bourgeois SNP concentrate on “equality, social justice and prosperity **only within the limits already laid down** by an inherently unequal social system” (Brown, 1975, p.113). Nevertheless, Burnett explicitly recognises that there is nothing inherently wrong with ‘nationalism’, and sees positive aspects to SNP success. Nationalism can be progressive or reactionary, although clearly to Burnett the SNP is reactionary.

McGrath shares this view, restating traditional opposition to nationalism and employing debate tropes. A doctrinaire picture of Scotland and its place in the ‘world economic crisis’ is presented: while independence can be addressed “emotionally, chauvinistically, dogmatically, even practically”, many Scots prefer to do so with regard to its “importance in the international struggle of the exploited against international capitalism - and to do so rationally and realistically” (Brown, 1975, p.135). As noted above, McGrath endorses the working class Scotland conceptualisation. Associated with this he recognises the appeal of nationalism: “every nationalist orator knows how easy it is to arouse the deep resentment of a Scottish audience against the boorish Sassanach” (Brown, 1975, p.136). UK over-

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centralisation and oil has led some to believe 'sure economic power' to be within Scotland's grasp, reversing Scotland's (class) relationship with England. This raises "vital tactical questions" for Scottish socialists, as the SNP "has become the major expression not only of xenophobic emotion, but also of the demand for devolution of power and the final shaking off of England's 'colonial' rule" (Brown, 1975, 136). Nevertheless, McGrath agrees with Burnett's conclusion that the SNP is a "curious place for socialist to be" (Brown, 1975, p.137). Few socialists would deny Scotland's right "to secede from England", even on a non-socialist basis, but the duty of any socialist is to work for creation of a socialist Scotland (in or out of the UK) although there is "nothing narrowly 'nationalist' about the concept of a Scottish socialist republic" as John McLean demonstrated (Brown, 1975, p.139). Thus, while McGrath recognises some validity to nationalism, he reasserts the traditional socialist response to it: nothing should weaken Trade Union unity as the same capitalists run both countries. The way to "genuine national independence" is by emphasising international socialism (Brown, 1975, p.140).

Both Burnett and McGrath prioritise socialism over 'nationalism', while recognising that the two are not necessarily incompatible. Tait, one of two SNP contributors to Brown (1975) argues, in contrast, that the SNP should be supported as "a progressive force in our historical context" as:

“it creates at least the precondition for loosening the strangle-hold of the international and national capitalist apparatus...Neo-nationalism...highlight[s] people’s desperate sense of vulnerability to the concentration of economic power...[and] increased centralised and harmonised political power” (Brown, 1975, p.125).

Socialists should not ignore this (Brown, 1975, p.126). Whilst recognising the traditional socialist fear of Labour disunity, Tait argues that, as left wing activists have been able to work within Labour, “despite their reservations because it has enjoyed substantial working class support”, they should be able to work within the SNP: “[p]olitical choices of this kind...are a consequence of the gap between politics and ideological position” (Brown, 1975, p.129). Opposing nationalism as irrelevant to socialism fails to see both as phases of history and, referencing Nairn’s analysis, Tait argues that uneven development of capital has led to a situation where conflicts are not necessarily left versus right, but the search for control and protection from “unmitigated super capitalism”, with British governments unable to protect Scotland: the resulting neo-nationalism can aid in a socialist strategy (Brown, 1975, p.131). He notes ‘radical’ SNP policies, such as land reform, compatible with socialism, though their achievement would depend on the power socialists could muster post-independence; and the SNP’s ‘social democratic’ leadership. In terms of the latter, Tait recognises that this is the wrong language for socialists, and that some SNP leaders perceive class as a diversion preferring ‘communitarian myths’; however, this is more naivety than ‘political wickedness’ or a “sly new version of Toryism” (Brown, 1975, p.132) and is because the ‘SNP is ‘a vehicle for a movement’ spanning the ideological

spectrum (Brown, 1975, p.132). There are problems with the ways such movements can be used, Tait recognises, and the only answer is to strengthen the SNP left.

Edwards, the other SNP contributor to Brown (1975), similarly, recognises and encourages ideological dialogue. In Kennedy (1976) this is reinforced by his paper, 'Socialism or Nationalism?', which concludes the collection. Edwards notes, as a contributor to both collections, that all Brown contributors were socialists and most nationalist; and all Kennedy contributors are nationalism and most socialist "in some sense of the term[s]" (Kennedy, 1976, p.98). He asserts that "a Scottish socialism which fails to come to terms with nationalism is in some way defective, as is a Scottish nationalism which fails to address itself to the challenge of socialism" (Kennedy, 1976, p.98). However, he notes the problem of language: due to "prostitution of terminology" nationalism is a "dirty word" to socialists, evoking Hitler and the IRA while socialism has been a "dirty word" to nationalists, "who with equal lack of justification" tie it to "the computer type bureaucracy of a soulless, dictatorial metropolis" (Kennedy, 1976, p.98). The use throughout of inclusive language (such as 'we') in addressing both socialists and nationalists rhetorically unites them. Ideological identification is reinforced through quoting "Scottish nationalist and socialist" James Connolly, whose slogan "organise for a full, free and happy life. FOR ALL OR FOR NONE", Edwards argues "should animate both movements" (Kennedy, 1976, p.98). Edwards states *his* dislike for the term 'social democracy' as opposed to democratic socialism and recognises the hostility of some 'social democrats' to socialism. However, he asserts, the SNP's self-styled 'social democrats', are socialists: some SNP members are socialist in public, some in private, many 'so-called' social democrats "seem

possessed of an acceptable down payment on intellectual commitment to socialism” and others do not use the term but are more socialist than many professed socialists (Kennedy, 1976, p.101). Edwards asserts ideological compatibility and relates this implicitly to a notion of left wing Scotland: “[w]e have to create a situation where our remarkable asset - patriotism which still remains open to the vocabulary of a Scottish socialist without loss of his socialism - can be employed to show that the language of patriotism was the language of socialism” (Kennedy, 1976, p.109).

The SLP explicitly seeks to unite socialism and nationalism. In discussing the SLP, Edwards argues that the division between the SLP and SNP serves neither ideology. The SLP is, Edwards argues, an intellectuals’ revolt and an admission that Labour has failed but the SNP is the real promise of Scottish socialism (Kennedy, 1976, p.100). The SLP reinforced ideological dialogue, however, and less ambivalently than a number of contributions considered so far. Thus, Lindsay Paterson, a member of the SLP National Organising Committee, notes that the SLP has many enemies due to its potential, derived from fusing “two of the most powerful forces in Scottish history: socialism and nationalism...a movement fired by these two ideas can sweep all before it” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3). Paterson argues that the party’s constitutional position is:

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“clear and distinctive...Independence - because that’s the only way that we in Scotland can do anything about the appalling condition of our country after centuries of capitalist rule from Westminster. In the EEC - because that’s the only way to avoid parochial separatism of the kind offered by the more myopic elements of the SNP” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3).

Paterson thus employs partisan tropes from the evaluative debate, as well as the democratic debate: “the socialism of the SLP is as much a revolt against bureaucratic centralism as it is against unfettered private enterprise” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3), versus the ‘BLP’ vision of “enlightened Oxbridge bureaucrats handing out largesse to a ‘region’” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3). This ‘SLP outlook’ is “a radical socialism”:

“The SLP realise, as the SNP do not that, ownership confers power - and that the Scottish people will never have any genuine independence until they own their own country. Independence is, therefore, not merely a constitutional question after the settlement of which all will go on as before, with Edinburgh replacing Westminster, Charlotte Square for the City, Douglas Crawford for Dennis Healey. In fact it is an opportunity for radical social change” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3).

This Paterson contrasts with three groups: the ‘BLP right’ opposed to any change; the ‘BLP left’ opposed to ‘constitutional tinkering’ as only the economy matters, “and it does” but “the purpose of socialism is to enrich people’s lives in the same way as Scottish independence can enrich Scottish democracy” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3);

thirdly, he contrasts the SLP with the SNP, which “offers no vision of a radical Scotland”, when there is, rather, a need to “grasp the thistle of independence to build a more just society in Scotland” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.3).

The first edition of *Crann-Tara* contains two explicitly opposed articles by Sillars, for the SLP, and Gavin Kennedy, for the SNP. Both seek to align socialism, nationalism and their respective parties. Sillars states that he is not in the SNP because it cannot be converted to “an ideological stance, and certainly not a left socialist position” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.4). SNP anti-socialism, Sillars asserts, is honest, exemplified by the SNP leadership’s negative response to Macdonald and Reid’s declaration of SNP social democracy (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.4). It is healthier for socialists favouring independence to have their own party, he claims, and the groundwork for a socialist Scotland must predate independence:

“[t]here is no use waiting until Independence Day to start the argument about what kind of [Scotland] we should seek...that would be to surrender Scotland to the whims and fancies of Charlotte Square and Scottish capitalism” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.4).

Sillars asserts that while the SNP wants independence as an end, the SLP wants independence as a means to the end of socialism, and there is room for both parties (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.4). Kennedy’s reply agrees that the SNP is not socialist, but argues that Sillars “is wrong to give it real significance” as it is not incumbent



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on socialists only to join socialist organisations: how socialist, he rhetorically asks, is the ‘BLP’ and how many socialists are in it? (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.5) Kennedy argues that the SLP hinders independence, exemplified by its initial commitment to devolution. The change to independence occurred as the BLP adopted devolution and “effectively cut off the flow of disillusioned recruits”, forcing the SLP to find another role: some members returned to the BLP while others joined the SNP “because the experience of the SLP and the break with the BLP concentrated their political development and...broke through their Britishness” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.5). Outlining his response to the SLP claim of radical socialism, Kennedy’s vision is similar to Paterson and Sillars. He asserts that the SLP can watch, rejoin the BLP in opposition to this programme or, if they want independence, “they had better join the SNP - like now!” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.5) Again there are clear strategic aims evident in these contributions, but a denial of ideological incompatibility. These contributions also demonstrate *Crann-Tara* providing an explicit forum for this dialogue, as do *Calgacus* and *Q*. That these magazines were all founded in 1975/1976 shows a perceived need for such forums.

That *Crann-Tara: Scotland’s Radical Quarterly* is nationalist in orientation is indicated by its masthead (as is, ambiguously, its Celticism): ‘Liberty for the Individual, Independence for the Nation, Brotherhood for the Race’. This magazine is not aligned with any party, although the editor, Easton, was a member of Sillars’s SLP.<sup>144</sup> For example, the magazine

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<sup>144</sup> Easton (1970) had argued for the compatibility of ‘progressive’ nationalism and Marxism. This early explicit example of dialogue (referenced above, see Chapter Four, p.205) was, however, written when Easton was a member of a minor left wing party and there is no indication of a wide readership. Nevertheless,

interprets Labour's victory in a by-election in symbolically important Hamilton as a message to the SNP that "classlessness is nonsense...movements can be apolitical but parties, yes even national parties - must be founded on solid political rock" (No. 3, Summer 1978, p.2). This need not be socialist (the 'BLP' is named as an example) but, reinforcing the working class Scotland trope, it is necessary to *seem* working class: "[a] working class talking party is needed to win West-Central Scotland to nationalism, and working class Scotland is needed to win Independence for Scotland" (No. 3, Summer 1978, p.2). The "SLP wants to be...[this party] but something's needed now and the SLP can't fill the role in the foreseeable future. The initiative clearly has to come from the SNP itself" (No. 3, Summer 1978, p.2). The editorial, indeed, argues for a:

"non-partisan front for home rule...An old style MOVEMENT for Scottish self-government that embraces OPEN FACTIONS of Tories, Liberals, Labourites...regiments tailored to the specific terrain they will encounter in the fight for independence. There are places for tanks, places for paratroopers, places for Tories" (No.3, Summer 1978, p.2).

Within the SNP, "[t]o avoid the taint of the Tartan-Tories, we need to hear...the Tartan Lefties" (No. 3, Summer '78, p.2). The SNP would get more votes if they became again a broad movement wide enough to include home rulers as "every country that has become independent has begun by wanting home rule" (No. 3, Summer 1978, p.3). The first

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Easton provides an example of how the SLP brought in figures and views from the far-left to the centre of the discourse community.

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*Crann-Tara* editorial sets out the aims of the magazine, including to reinforce socialist/nationalist dialogue. The magazine's archaic name reflects the archaism of Scotland's problems: '*Crann-Tara*' - a 'gathering stick' – was used to summon villagers at times of danger, and the magazine aims to "summon the clan" into the open from "desperate political hidey-holes" and "create a new awareness of common aims and common dangers" (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.2) before independence. Thus, "[w]e join with McLean in harking back to what he called 'the communism of the clans' in order to re-establish it on a common basis. We want to pull together Nationalism and Socialism" (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.2).

*Calgacus* also exemplifies ideological commonality. The name suggests the magazine's nationalism, reinforced through the explanation reprinted in each edition: that Calgacus was credited by Tacitus as the resistance leader against Roman incursions into what would become Scotland. The explanation states that the 'Celtic confederation of tribes' united against the Romans and Calgacus, 'distinguished for valour and military skills' was chosen to lead. Calgacus's speech of resistance, from Tacitus, is reprinted, with its famous conclusion that the Romans "**create a desolation and call it peace**" (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.16). The reference to a 'Celtic confederation' emphasises an inclusive form of Scottishness with overtones of decentralisation and communalism, reinforced by Calgacus's references to kinship; that Calgacus was *chosen* to lead implicitly reaffirms the myth of Scottish democracy; the opposition to 'foreign domination' is easily translatable as English imperialism or external economic dominance.

*Calgacus*'s first editorial locates the magazine on the left: the time of publication is declared a bad time to begin a magazine due to the "crisis of capitalism" but this makes it necessary for Scotland to have a "committed forum" (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). The assertion that *Scotland* needs such a forum is justified: while the crisis is not particularly Scottish or British it is necessary to "relate universal problems" to "specific realities" and in "our case" this is Scotland (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). The link of socialism and nationalism is then reinforced. *Calgacus* is 'guilty' on the British left for admitting that "Scotland exists. The Left traditionally opposes **nationalism** and unless the struggle to achieve a socialist Scotland is seen as part of a socialist world it will not only be stunted but will also be doomed" (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). However, unless the consequences of Union on Scottish social development, and particularly Scottish working class development, are recognised socialist activity will be less effective: "[i]t is a ludicrous situation that the left, advocates of historical analysis, precise exposition and the rich potential of man, should be failing to recognise Scotland, scorn the first two and thereby deny the development of the latter" (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). Socialism requires knowledge of socialism by the workers, as its achievement depends on "that sole agency capable of achieving a new social order, the Scottish working class" (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.2). The tone of *Calgacus*, therefore, is of socialist/nationalist dialogue if not synthesis. The range of articles includes issues likely to appeal to both groups: the Scottish economy;<sup>145</sup> Ireland and other 'celtic nations';<sup>146</sup> Scottish culture;<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> 'Oil and the Bosses' in No.1, Winter 1975; the ownership of business in No.2, Summer 1975.

<sup>146</sup> The IRA, 'Europe's forgotten minorities' and 'Left wing Nationalism in Brittany' in No.1, Winter 1975; Northern Ireland in No.2, Summer 1975.

Scottish 'radicalism'.<sup>148</sup> The magazine shows editorial independence in regard to both Labour and the SNP, adding to its first editorial's criticism of the traditional opposition of socialism and nationalism, for example bemoaning the 'eclipse' of socialist arguments within Labour and their complete absence in the approach to the EEC referendum adopted by the SNP (*Calgacus*, No.2, Summer 1975, p.2). Gibson similarly illustrates socialist/nationalist dialogue, describing the election of eleven SNP MPs in October 1974 as the "biggest single upheaval of the political scene since the Clydsiders were elected" (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.14), in an article positively evaluating the SNP. Red Clydeside, a positive association for Scottish socialists, is here associated with the SNP.

Of these magazines, *Q* has the widest reach of contributors, although Labour makes reference to "the latest issue of *Q*, which seems very much SNP controlled" (1977a, p.2). There are a number of SNP contributors and the magazine is broadly 'nationalist' in outlook. Outside of the SNP, the bulk of contributors are Labour supporters or 'left wing' with Labour MPs JP Mackintosh, Brown and (then) Sillars contributing. The magazine thus demonstrates an open and evolving dialogue between socialism and nationalism, through the common interlocutors of the discourse community. While there are conflicting views, there is also evidence of attempts at synthesis from both sides, and shared concerns. Further, contributions from Steel, Rifkind and Teddy Taylor suggests that this discourse is relatively open. Indeed, one editorial calls for broad unity between "all those who want a

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<sup>147</sup> Poems by nationalist poet Sorley McLean in No.1, Winter 1975; a reprint of Gramsci on 'folk-culture' in No.2, Summer 1975.

<sup>148</sup> The Highland Land League in No.2, Summer 1975; and No.3, Spring 1976; Keir Hardie in No.2, Summer 1975; the 'Scottish tradition' of radicalism in No.3, Spring 1976

worthwhile assembly...The Liberals, Nationalists, Maximalists” (*Q*, December 1975, p.3). The reference to ‘maximalists’ and a ‘worthwhile assembly’ are instructive on the editorial position of *Q*, and this is mirrored by a number of contributors.

In *Q*, Bayne asserts that the SNP unites socialism and nationalism, for example describing the confrontation in Strathclyde Council between Labour “in one corner (not necessarily the left-hand one!)” and the SNP (*Q*, October, 1975, p.13). He interprets the main problem for the SNP as being that most of its votes are anti-Labour but the SNP is “increasingly left of centre” (*Q*, October 1975, p.13). In a later edition Bayne assesses McGrath’s contribution to Scottish politics, noting that McGrath “shiftily avoided any firm commitment to a nationalist interpretation of his message” (*Q*, December, 1975, p.18). *The Cheviot* makes clear independence is ‘not enough’ but, Bayne argues, most of the SNP would agree and McGrath’s play benefits the SNP. Indeed, Bayne notes a “dialogue between the Scottish left and the inevitably Bourgeois SNP” increasingly evident in McGrath’s later plays (*Q*, December 1975, p.18). This mirrors Edwards, who notes that McGrath’s 7:84 theatre-company will “continue to lampoon us...and we shall, I trust, continue to applaud and cheer it” (Kennedy, 1976, p.108).

Reid explicitly asserts evidence of dialogue, arguing that a Parliamentary devolution debate “revealed not only the extreme chasm...between what the average English MP thinks devolution is about and what the ordinary Scot expects from it. It also provided the first hint of a realignment of politics north of the border” (*Q*, 1976, p.4). He notes particularly the ‘odd bedfellows’ opposing devolution - “poor Jim Sillars sitting mute as

passages of his Nat-bashing *Don't Butcher Scotland's Future* were thrust down his throat", and:

"Alick Buchanan-Smith, defending an elected assembly to the last, being publicly and repeatedly knifed by Iain Sproat. The astute Teddy Taylor preaching Unionism but (just to be on the safe side) admitting that there was a case for nationalism, and dear Jeremy Thorpe floundering among the rampant federalism of his own four parties, having to admit that Westminster would be both the English and the British Parliament" (*Q*, February 1976, p.4).

While this 'knock about' was reported, "the new consensus which emerged from the centre/centre left...among Scotland's 71 MPs" (*Q*, February 1976, p.4) was not. Nevertheless:

"[a] careful study of the recent speeches of, for example Dick Mabon, David Steel and myself, reveals an overwhelmingly pre-occupation with the need for decentralised decision making in the economic field, and with the consequences for Scotland of the UK's entry into Europe. Jim Sillars has exactly the same stark points. But after the devolution/self-government/independence arguments have been settled, I suspect he wants to build the kind of Scotland you won't find this side of Yugoslavia" (*Q*, February 1976, p.4).

Such strong criticism of the SLP by an SNP MP, of course, betrays partisan competition for the same ideological territory. However, Reid argues that, while this analysis may be simplistic, it is apparent that the ‘real Scottish battle’:

“is to be between the social democrats and the socialists. Between those pragmatists who believe in a mixed economy, and are neither for nor against nationalisation ideologically, and those who want a return to a purer, more fundamental socialism in the old ILP tradition. Between those who are primarily concerned with individual rights and emphasise classlessness, and those who adopt a fundamental class approach to politics” (*Q*, February 1976, p.4).

This consensus has been submerged by the constitutional issue on which, “to all intents and purposes Jim Sillars and the SNP are going down the same devolutionary path”, while those with whom the SNP would rather associate are “trapped by their Unionist masters” (*Q*, February 1976, p.4). In this respect, Reid expresses hope that the SLP succeeds, ending the “uneasy relationship between out-and-out socialists and social democrats or left wing liberals which is the current party of Harold Wilson” (*Q*, February 1976, p.4). The real battle is who will “pick up the traditional Labour right wing” (*Q*, February 1976, p.4). He asks rhetorically if a new “Scandinavian model of politics” is emerging with “a national majority, social democratic party...waiting in the wings with a genuinely socialist grouping on the left and a Tory Poujadiste rump on the right” (*Q*, February 1976, p.4). Otherwise it is necessary to make “the best of a bad job” through “the curious misalliance



of SNP-ers...Sillarsites...Labour social democrats and Labour left wingers” (*Q*, February 1976, p.5).

Steel, responding to Reid, does not endorse his assessment but does not explicitly disagree, admitting that the SLP may be a sign of “exciting changes” in Scottish politics and, building on the evaluative debate, recognising that “[n]ationalism is not an ideology. It is itself politically neutral...capable of being used for the greater good of mankind in any given state...[or] the greatest damage” (*Q*, March 1976, p.4). The SNP need to find a philosophy as “there has to come a moment when given self-government (however inadequate...) we have to decide what to do with it” (*Q*, March 1976, p.4). Edwards similarly sees the possibility of new alliances, noting that Sillars was one of the South Ayrshire Labourites, as solid and anti-nationalist “as the Ross from whence they are hewn” (*Q*, March 1976, p.2). Noting Sillars initial opposition to the SNP (which Sillars termed the ‘silly nonsense party’) and move to the SLP (which Edwards dubs the ‘Sillars nonsense party’), Edwards asks if the SLP will “prove a survival capsule or appropriate bridge”, and argues that Sillars may find himself making common cause with old enemies (*Q*, June 1976, p.2). It is arguable, indeed, that part of the reason for SLP failure (entryism apart) was that it exemplified a unification of socialism and nationalism that was already occurring on a broader level through the creation of the discourse community, as illustrated above.

## §6. The Radical Myth?

Chapter Three noted that in retrospect a Scottish radical tradition is often appealed to, and the constitutional debate is occasionally implicated within this tradition. Radicalism is also contemporaneously appealed to, and positively evaluated, within this evolving discourse community. Thus, it is utilised as explicit self-description, as in *Crann-Tara* while Paterson calls for “a radical socialism, which perhaps owes something to the radical traditions of earlier Scottish democrats” (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.3). The SLP states it is a “socialist party with a radical philosophy related to the mood of the times” offering choice to “the great mass of Scots with radical inclination. The SLP will gather strength provided we keep on course with the mainstream of Scottish politics” (SLP, No.1, July 1976, p.4). Radicalism is obviously perceived as being in the Scottish political mainstream. Radicalism is clearly appealed to in Kennedy’s *The Radical Approach* (1976) and referenced positively by a number of contributors to Brown (1975). Young, for example, argues that, “[t]he persistence of the myth that ‘Scotland has always been a radical country’...has simultaneously contributed to the decline of Labourism and the rise of Scottish nationalism” (Brown, 1975, p.282).

Location in this perceived radical tradition also occurs through addressing, no doubt sincerely, what are seen as traditional ‘radical’ concerns. *Crann-Tara* addresses topics such as land reform, the ‘Highland question’ and Gaelic language, commonly associated with this tradition. For example, the front cover of *Crann-Tara* No.1 is a photograph of G.B. Clark, ex-MP for Caithness and Sutherland and President of the Highland Land League.

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An article by Clark is reprinted from Johnston's *Forward*, thus linking *Crann-Tara* both to socialist and radical traditions, and reinforcing an association of the two; in the second edition, Gibson states that "[a]ny political party in Scotland which fails to adopt a clear land policy does not deserve to be taken seriously" (No. 2, Spring 1978, p.8). Similarly Sillars writes on land in Brown (1975), as well as in *Q*: "the future Scotland that is sought by the radical movement is one that is more democratic, more open self-confident and more in charge of its own basic assets and destiny than ever before" (*Q*, December 1975, p.4). SLP policy paper subjects locate the SLP within this tradition. The first, 'Jobs and Industry' (SLP, No.1, July 1976), emphasises the economic focus of the party; the second on land reform (SLP, September 1976) locates the party within the radical tradition; the third, 'Scottish Government' (SLP, November 1976), re-emphasises the constitutional claims of the party. The ordering of the papers emphasises the economic and radical impetus of the party, with constitutional change as one important aspect of a broader programme. Both Brown (1975) and Kennedy (1976) contain considerations of land and the 'Highland Question'. Thus, Edwards argues that Sillars's views on 'the land question' "seem akin to our own in everything but name", despite his partisan opposition to the SNP who, Edwards asserts, have a more socialist policy. Edwards asserts that Sillars's sense of what is practical "leads him to ask for too little" and the SNP have a more "radical" position (Kennedy, 1976, p.101). These topics also feature in *Calgacus* and *Q*. Topics such as oil, industrial ownership and constitutional reform could be viewed as additions, given their frequent association through reference, to this radical tradition.

Radicalism is seen within this discourse community to flow from or include Scottish socialism, and so the dialogue of socialism and nationalism flows into a debate over who represents this 'radical' tradition. As contributors seek to rhetorically synthesise socialism and nationalism, 'radicalism' can be conceptualised as a means to this end. Thus, *Crann-Tara* seeks to draw together "radicals and nationalists" (*Crann-Tara*, Winter 1977, No.1, p.2). Indications that this radical tradition is socialist are clear through the socialist location of the magazine. Bayne writes on 'The radical heritage of Scottish nationalism' (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.8). Noting SNP origins in the merger of the "basically left wing" NPS and right-wing Scottish party, he argues that, despite 'tartan-Tory' taunts, "the locomotive power behind the steady resurgence of Scottish nationalism through the past hundred years or so has undoubtedly come from the left of the political spectrum" (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1976, p.8) and the pre-war home rule movement's had a "virtual monopoly left wing" leadership (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.9).

Reid seeks to claim the radical mantle from Labour: "[i]t is a sad spectacle to see a party which once represented the genuinely radical impulses of the Scottish people being bullied by its Parliamentary Party's old Etonian Chairman", Dalyell, into "welching" on its commitment to devolution (SNP Press Release, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1975). Similarly, Kennedy's *The Radical Alternative: Papers for an Independent Scotland* (1976) seeks to adopt radicalism for the SNP. Nairn reviews Kennedy, suggesting that this and recent SNP policy documents are evidence that the old socialist/nationalist debate is outdated: "I put 'radicals' and 'socialists' together here because clearly, in so far as nationalists have become generally radical, and socialists have become Scottish, they have the most

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powerful and common interests” (*Q*, July 1976, p.11). When nationalists argued for leaving substantial questions until after independence, Nairn notes, independence was an abstraction; as this is no longer so, all radicals, nationalists and socialists, “however differently their ideologies remain - acquire a mutual interest in the construction of a viable arena to conduct their affairs in. They will have to redefine their quarrels in a new Scottish context” (*Q*, July 1976, p.11).

It is clear throughout Kennedy (1976) that while, unsurprisingly, the ‘radical alternative’ of the title is an alternative to Labour, ‘radicalism’ is left wing. This is evident in the content and topics of the contributions: Maxwell’s criticism of Labour, and ‘social democracy’ as an SNP aim, *from the left*; papers on ‘radical’ topics and Edward’s concluding paper asserting commonality between socialism and nationalism, asserting that “I know my party [the SNP] and believe its impulses radical” (Kennedy, 1976, p.108). Independence offers the opportunity for Scots to exploit Scots: the answer is not to deny independence but to aim for an independence which is “true, radical and real...in which those who claim to free their people must be personally responsible for guarding the vital freedoms of everyone in the new state. Otherwise our independence is worthless” (Kennedy, 1976, p.108). Only “with a sense of community needs and socialist equality can we carry such real nationalism into effect” (Kennedy, 1976, p.108). Macdonald’s ‘Foreword’, indeed, illustrates both strategic rhetorical uses of radicalism as well as reinforcing its left wing, and evaluatively positive, conceptualisation:

“[p]erhaps it is in this eagerness to meet the challenge of independence rather than in wasted determination to solve the congenital problems of the Scottish region which distinguishes the Nationalist from the Devolutionist, the Radical from the Conservative” (Kennedy, 1976, p.iii).

Kennedy’s contributors, she argues, allay the “fears of those fainthearts and devolutionists amongst us who dread the loss of London’s overbearing influence” (Kennedy, 1976, p.iii). ‘We’ is ambiguously used (we nationalists? we Scots?); devolutionists and opponents are dismissed as equally afraid of independence. Lastly, ‘radical’ is clearly associated with independence and opposed to Conservatism, associated with support for devolution and, given the tone of the book and critical terms used to describe devolutionists (fainthearts), negatively evaluated. Radicalism is also left wing: Macdonald perceives the vision of “the radical alternative open to Scotland” presented in Kennedy (1976) as “one in the eye for those who think a Labour party membership card automatically corners the market in internationalism, fraternalism, humanitarianism and so on” (Kennedy, 1976, p.iii).

It is, therefore, evident that radicalism is both positively evaluated and conceptualised as left wing within this evolving discourse community. Indeed, this is reinforced through a number of contributions asserting that radicalism is more left wing than socialism. Thus, Harvie argues that the dominant force motivating the increase in a purely ‘Scottish’ politics is a revival of radicalism that, he argues, is British rather than specifically Scottish phenomenon. The “dominant interpretation”, Harvie argues, is that the split of the UK Liberal party over home rule in 1886 detached liberalism from the old Whig middle-class

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and impelled liberalism towards the working class and the left, implicitly associated (*Q*, April 1976, p.5). Harvie questions this interpretation, suggesting home rule was a policy to check rather than foster radicalism: “socialism was for the ruling class far safer than radicalism” (*Q*, April 1976, p.5). The implicit claim is that radicalism is more left wing than ‘socialism’, as traditionally interpreted in the UK. Currie, more explicitly, argues that “[t]he Scottish political tradition is one of radicalism rather than socialism of the state-centred variety” and the Declaration of Arbroath is appealed to as proof that “distrust of the political machine is a long established feature of the Scottish tradition” (*Q*, May 1976, p.8). These assessments recall Maxwell’s criticisms of social democracy as inadequate to meet socialist aims. Maxwell, however, disagrees with Harvie, arguing that the radicalism in question *is* Scottish rather than a variation of a British movement (*Q*, May 1976, p.5). Thus, while within the discourse community radicalism is frequently asserted, positively evaluated, and defined as a left wing concept even in contrast to socialism, there is some disagreement over its provenance and significance. This could be conceptualised as a contestation over the identity of the discourse community: as Chapter Two outlined, contestations over history are contestations over identity, with identity an ideological/discursive construction including perceptions of the past and mythic narratives. Indeed, there is evidence of conscious recognition of the mythic aspects of radicalism. There is, therefore, alongside a rhetorical synthesis of socialism and nationalism, a contested mythic narrative within which to situate the discourse community.

## The Scottish Constitutional Debate 1967 - 1979

Maxwell provides the most explicit considerations of myth within the debate and in direct relation to radicalism. He asserts diversity in Scottish radicalism's historical sources, constructing a narrative genealogy from the nineteenth century Liberal party, through Labour and now the SNP (Kennedy, 1976, p.19). The common mythic claim that class division is an English importation must be dismissed, he argues, but "the ethos of Scottish society is more egalitarian than that of English society" (Kennedy, 1976, p.19), thus recognising a myth while reinforcing its traditional implications. This egalitarianism, he asserts, is a legacy of Calvinist radicalism and "a romantic and selective retrospect of Scottish history" (Kennedy, 1976, p.19). Thus, he states education is so important to the survival of Scottish identity that it has developed its own mythology of the parochial school where all social classes mix; a self-perception as being peculiarly high quality; and the belief "that the Scottish working class was the most literate if not literary working class in Europe...[these have] played a key part in moulding Scotland's image of itself as a democratic society" (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5). Maxwell recognises that Scotland is particularly rich in myths, which have historically defined its identity, and argues that in the "present transitional state of Scottish consciousness, Scotland's dependence on myth is perhaps greater than ever" (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5). New myths emerge as old ones lose strength, and:

"[a]t a time of national revival it is not only the nationalists who see in the manipulation of national myths a powerful instrument of propaganda. In Scotland today no political interest can expect to be allowed a monopoly of myth-making and propagating" (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5).



## The Development of a Discourse Community

Maxwell argues that the left has “equipped itself with the most impressive array of national myths” including that Scotland has strong reactionary elements, evident in seventeenth century Presbyterian intolerance, punitive poor laws, authoritarian educational traditions and the “brutalities of Scottish capitalism” (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5). These myths, he argues, are used to support anti-nationalist arguments:

“[t]his myth of black, Calvinist Scotland has coexisted on the left with another superficially antipathetic myth...that the Scottish working class has an instinct for radical if not revolutionary socialism lacking in its Sassenach counterpart” (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5).

This is the ‘legend’ of Red Clydeside and the “popular myth - which owes more to the idiosyncrasies of the British electoral system than to anything else - that Scotland is a socialist country” (Kennedy, 1976, p.19). This is clearly reinforced by the assertion of working class socialist Scotland through the discourse community, although here there is evidently an evaluative debate over the implications of this assertion: Maxwell argues that the implication of this myth is ambiguous as “its chief role seems to be not to act as a spur to radical action by the Scottish left but to console it for the bleakness of its own vision of Calvinist Scotland” (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5). It must be recognised that Maxwell is himself engaged in myth manipulation here as he attributes negative aspect of traditional Scottish myths to Labour. Nevertheless, his account is instructive, recognising that “[t]he historical accuracy of a myth...is less interesting than the political uses to which it is put” (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5).

Scottish nationalism, Maxwell admits, is even more mythically fertile, with a long history of “the grand myth of Scottish democracy” from sources such as Celtic tribal democracy, Wallace, Presbyterianism and early Scottish socialism’s commitment to home rule (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5).<sup>149</sup> That Scotland is egalitarian, Maxwell notes:

“is central to the myth of Scottish democracy. In its strong nationalist version, class division is held to be an alien importation from England. In the weaker version it describes the wider opportunity for social mobility in Scotland” (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1976, p.5).

Such myths “have served a valuable role in mobilising Scottish energies to attack a failed status quo” (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1976, p.5). However, there are dangers as the ‘myths of Scottish democracy’ have been often used to “justify an uncritical acceptance of nationalism’s claim to be a decentralising, anti-bureaucratic” force and promote independence as a panacea (*Q*, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1976, p.5). Scotland, Maxwell asserts, is a class society with inequalities; the education system is often not of high quality, too authoritarian and philistine; the anti-bureaucratic element fails to recognise that challenging many of Scotland’s problems will require strong state action. Nevertheless:

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<sup>149</sup> Indeed, assertion of ‘Celtic’ egalitarianism and fellowship are present in a number of sources. For example, *Calgacus* carries articles on ‘Celtic’ nations, for example ‘Left Wing Nationalism in Brittany’ (*Calgacus*, No.1, Winter 1975, p.6); *Crann-Tara* carries adverts for *Cairn: The Quarterly Journal of the Celtic League* and references to the ‘Communalism of the Clans’ (*Crann-Tara*, No.1, Winter 1977, p.2); while Edwards (Brown, 1975; in Kennedy, 1976) makes reference to Irish examples and inspirations.

## The Development of a Discourse Community

“to criticise the cherished myths of Scottish democracy is not to deny them all significance. They reflect real, though partial, elements in Scottish society - which in the past has been more democratic than Scottish society and which even today has a more democratic ethos” (*Q*, November 1976, p.5).

Thus, myth is recognised and criticised, but ultimately reasserted, and the criticisms recall Maxwell’s criticisms of social democracy: another more acceptable version is possible. Radicalism is associated with opposition to the current state form but also to redeveloped elements of socialism. Maxwell demonstrates a conscious attempt to develop a mythic narrative supportive of a left wing ‘radical’ conception of Scotland constructed through this discourse community, although clearly inflected with partisan intentions. Indeed, in reviewing Nairn (1977), Maxwell prioritises his alternative myth-interpretation by indicating that it is less mythic. Praising Nairn (1977) as an “antidote to naïve idealist theories of nationalism”, he suggests one “possible implication” of Nairn’s theory is the possibility of a “Nationalism that discards nationalist myths” (*Q*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1977, p.7). Given the evidence of Scotland’s existence from:

“Scotland’s legal system to the Scottish football league, from the STUC and the Scottish National Orchestra to Andy Stewart...the elaboration of myths about Wallace and Bruce is superfluous. A case for independence can be constructed which owes nothing to traditional Nationalist categories but which rests instead on a reasoned conviction that independence is necessary to release the full potential [of] Scotland in the latter period of the twentieth century as perhaps Union, its problems and subsequent traumas notwithstanding, was to release Scotland’s potential in the eighteenth” (*Q*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1977, p.7).

Other contributors’ attempts to define radicalism are more concrete but, due to the implication of radicalism within the development of the discourse community, do not lack ‘mythic’ or identity implications. If, as *Crann-Tara* asserts, radicalism is a “return to the roots” (No. 1, Winter 1977, p.2), the question is how those roots are to be defined. Lindsay, for example, examines ‘power’ and ‘community’ to describe her preferred radical alternative. Failure to come to terms with problems of power, she argues, exposes the inadequacies of socialist and conservative thinking. The left sees social conflict simplistically as only concerned with wealth and poverty with all else as false-consciousness. The ‘romantic socialist’ tradition of Morris and Cole, concerned with community, culture and centralised power, has been usurped by conventional Statism and the distribution of resources, although distribution of goods often accompanies power (Kennedy, 1976, p.24). Lindsay here mirrors Maxwell’s call for an alternative left wing position. She asserts that although a large state *may* be able to redistribute wealth, it will concentrate power and “at best...change the nature of the elite” (Kennedy, 1976, p.25). For

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“more fundamental egalitarianism you must radically disperse...power and initiative and communication” (Kennedy, 1976, p.25). This call for decentralisation is allied to a discussion of ‘community’. To Lindsay, “anything which removes a group from the performance of, or involvement in, its own government can hardly help but weaken the sense of community” (Kennedy, 1976, p.25). Therefore, to Lindsay, radicalism is linked to decentralisation and community participation, themes evident in the democratic debate. Similarly, Brown raises the issue of ‘community’, calls for a more co-operative society, and references ‘early socialists’ visions of ending the private/collective dichotomy “by substituting communal co-operation for the divisive forces of competition” (Brown, 1975, p.8).

Focus on community and economic organisation is often linked to calls for ‘industrial democracy’, frequently referenced in relation to radicalism. As the economy becomes central to the debate, the issue of economic control and ownership is recurrent. Concern that external economic control had made Scotland a ‘branch plant economy’ is increasingly asserted towards the end of the period and external economic control is frequently noted and often linked to constitutional reform or broader socialist arguments. This concern is widespread within the discourse community, evident in Brown (1975), Kennedy (1976), *Q*, *Calgacus* and *Crann-Tara*, both developing from and contributing to discussions of the necessary economic powers to be devolved, extending concerns about accountability and responsibility to the economic sphere. Thus, Maxwell argues that the SNP should make democratic organisation a prerequisite for economic reform and that “radical measures of economic equalisation” may have to wait on inculcating “a new sense of community and

democratic responsibility” (Kennedy, 1976, p.17). Kennedy argues that while it is not possible to provide a full blueprint for the economic policy of a ‘radical’ Scottish government, the radical position is to reverse bureaucratic centralism, institute industrial democracy to serve social needs and end “the inordinate inequalities of wealth and income...common to both capitalist and socialist societies at present” (Kennedy, 1976, p.56). Institutions of this radical economy, combining tropes discussed in earlier chapters, will be “manageable, small, democratic and responsible” (Kennedy, 1976, p.56). Kennedy, indeed, seeks to reverse the argument against independence from economic integration, arguing that rather than being too integrated with the rest of the UK economy to be disentangled, the Scottish economy is ‘too dominated’. While regional policy recognises problems and has had some effect, Kennedy argues that it “*has been an instrument for the industrial colonisation of Scotland*”, turning Scotland into a “branch plant of England and corporations” (Kennedy, 1976, p.52). Therefore:

“[d]omination of Scottish industry is a reason for Scottish independence not an obstacle. The British government is handing over Scotland to external forces...if you want to make Scotland safe for the multi-nationalists, vote for the British connection” (Kennedy, 1976, p.54).

Nairn, reviewing Kennedy (1976), while not disagreeing with the aim of decentralisation is sceptical of calls for a weak state. Recognising the Scottish ideological perspective as anti-statist, he notes that ‘the Scots’ may be correct to want a ‘radically devolved’, self-regulating society; but a weak state need not follow. Only a strong state will be able to

transform society. As a “strong...centralist state is likely to be forced on us anyway by the real circumstances of self-rule...Radicals and socialists alike should be...concerned to get a state capable of working towards the sort of society they are blueprinting” (*Q*, June, 1976, p.11).

Through the development of the discourse community, therefore, there is an implicit and explicit dialogue between nationalism and socialism and within this dialogue, an invocation of radicalism as a positive position, attuned to the left wing ideological location of the discourse community. This debate is inflected with partisan dynamics, and so there are differences and debates over the implications of ideological dialogue and of radicalism. Nevertheless, there is identifiable a common set of interlocutors, conventions and references.

### **§7. Conventional Acceptance: Discounting the ‘Tories’.**

One implication of the creation of this discourse community is the exclusion of non-members. The conventions of this discourse community are, to some extent, diffused within the broader constitutional discourse as the diffusion of partisan tropes were seen diffused in earlier chapters: that the development of the discourse community is driven by partisan dynamics, and that the Labour/SNP rhetorical divide is dominant, requires other parties to react to the conventions developed over that partisan divide.<sup>150</sup> To the extent that

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<sup>150</sup> For example, ‘Scotland is British’ clearly courts socialist and working class voters: symbolically – in the title the ‘British’ in ‘Scotland is British’ is printed in red typeface; and substantively – devolution means

diffusion of discourse community conventions occurs, the exclusion of those who are not discourse community members is also the most obvious example of the acceptance of this discourse community's conventions within the broader constitutional debate: a rhetorical marginalisation of the Scottish Conservative party. While the thesis has thus far concentrated on the positive development of the discourse community, this negative aspect must be briefly addressed.

The development of this conventional exclusion is evident both in the partisan debate and the discourse community that develops from it. Thus, Labour, noting that a growing economy requires central government leadership, asserts that this "does not fit easily into the separatists free market philosophy" (1976c, p.4): SNP 'separatism' is dismissed by association with an economic philosophy asserted as unhelpful to Scotland's needs and associated with the Conservatives, "whose basic philosophy was in conflict with the interests of the Scottish people" (Labour, 1970, p.3). In contrast, "Scotland has voted Labour since the war...there is little doubt that the Scottish people want Socialist policies" (1976c, p.9). Labour associates the SNP and Conservatives by asserting Conservative 'lip service' to economic planning but sympathy for "market forces and unbridled free enterprise" (1969a, p.8), while the SNP were "strangely silent" as 'Tories' "neglected" Scotland (Labour, 1969a, p.4). Similarly, a common SLP strategy for asserting its socialism against the 'BLP' is to associate the latter with the Conservatives, as was

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"separation that would disrupt industry and put at risk that all-British character of the Trade Unions which it has taken generations...to achieve" (1977, p.2).



illustrated above (SLP 1976-1977).<sup>151</sup> More direct dismissals are evident in JP Mackintosh's assertion that the result of Scotland's economic problems and strong class structure is that "the Conservative party in Scotland is a weak unhappy remnant yet is constantly bolstered...by majorities in the UK Parliament" (1976, p.6). Gow dismisses the Conservatives as "a relic in Scotland" (Brown, 1975, p.59). Lindsay asserts that the Conservatives have supported "rampant commercialism" and, rather than defending community and culture, "have never hesitated to support development whatever the social cost" (Kennedy, 1976, p.24). Bayne accuses Conservatives of being "ostrich like", thinking that Scottish politics is still socialist versus Tories, or seeing the SNP as a "temporary aberration", and notes suspicion of their "real commitment" to devolution (*Q*, October 1975, p.13). The common charge by Labour that the SNP are 'tartan Tories', and by the SNP and the SLP that Labour is neither 'socialist' nor 'radical' enough and pursues the same policies as 'the Tories', places the Conservatives in the linguistic margins of the debate and entrenches a disassociation of Scottishness and Conservatism. Further, the evaluative advantage of 'radicalism' is reinforced: the intuitive counterpart of radicalism is 'conservatism'. Brown and Harvie implicitly endorse this dismissal of Conservative arguments by praising Dalyell's "straightforward and honest...[opposition to devolution]...his book...and a couple of pamphlets are virtually the only statements of the anti-case and ought to be answered" (1979, p.4).

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<sup>151</sup> See above, p.331.

Bell seeks to similarly sideline the Liberals. Employing emotionalist tropes commonly used against the SNP, this nationalist author notes that the Liberals nine years ago had enjoyed “one of their revivals” about which “[t]he accepted metropolitan theory was they clearly appealed to some romantic atavistic urge on the Celtic fringe” (*Q*, October 1975, p.4). The clear implication of this nationalist author is that Liberal success is fleeting: the Liberals act as a “way station” between Labour and the Conservative and, as the Liberals decline, the SNP inherits their vote creating, unlike the Liberals, a “new and lasting” voter allegiance (*Q*, October 1975, p.4). Nevertheless, Steel was identified by Reid, quoted above, as part of an emerging left wing consensus and the Liberals are connected to the development of the conventions of the constitutional debate and the discourse community. Thus, the nineteenth century Liberal party is often invoked as part of the historical pedigree of radicalism, while the Liberals themselves invoke “[t]he radical outlook of the Scottish Trade Union movement and some sectors of business [which] offer us a tremendous opportunity which we cannot seize without self-government” (1976, p.19). That this attempt at discursive exclusion fails emphasises the success of the marginalisation of the Conservatives.

Rhetorical sidelining of the Conservatives can be seen to have effects even on Conservative contributors to the broader constitutional debate. Rifkind, for example, writing significantly in one of the main forums of the discourse community, *Q*, accepts that “[m]ost journalists, academics and politicians firmly believe that the party’s roots in Scotland are skin-deep...that its allegiances are elsewhere” and Conservatives are seen as “feudal in their outlook and Anglicised in their image” (*Q*, November 1975, p.5). This

argument is “attractive but facile” as candidates now have more varied background than in the past and Conservatives win elections and seats: “while identification with a party and with its representatives are obviously major considerations they are not necessarily decisive” (*Q*, November 1975, p.5). Nevertheless, Rifkind admits that “[h]istorically, Scotland was never strong Conservative territory” (*Q*, November 1975, p.5) as the Liberals dominated the nineteenth century and “[o]nly with the Liberal decline and the advent of socialism did the Tories become a major force, and even then it was primarily as Unionists” (*Q*, November 1975, p.5). Rifkind argues that it is a “gross oversimplification” to describe England as Conservative and Scotland and Wales as Labour territory. Rather, Labour benefits where there are concentrations of working class Unionised populations such as the North of England, as do Conservatives where there are middle-class concentrations such as Edinburgh (*Q*, November 1975, pp.5-6). Notwithstanding the SNP, a minority of Conservative Trade-Unionists and middle-class Labourites, the basis of support is the same in England and Scotland. Rather:

“the main explanation for the weakness of the Tory party in Scotland is the weakness of the Scottish middle-class caused partly through emigration both to England and to overseas, and partly to the historical characteristics of the Scottish economy and Scottish society” (*Q*, November 1975, p.6).

Rifkind thus endorses, at least implicitly, that Scotland is more working class, although arguing that devolution offers the opportunity for Conservatives to “develop a new Scottish Unionism relevant to the needs and aspirations of modern Scotland” (*Q*, November 1975,

p.6). He ties this to a clear engagement in the partisan debate, asserting that most Scots are Unionist and oppose “the fundamentalist approach of the SNP” (*Q*, November 1975, p.6). The Conservatives should become champions of devolution, which is consistent with the Union and Conservatism (*Q*, November 1975, p.6). The devolution debate is too often conducted in terms of nationalism, the SNP and political tactics, he argues, but this need not be: many ‘Tories’ would like to see Scotland leading the way in the UK.

Home (1970) attempts to disassociate his committee from too close an association with his party. This might be thought desirable as an impartial committee would carry more weight in the overall discourse. However, the report’s clarity from the outset that not only Conservatives sit on the committee, which is in “neither composition nor intention” a party political exercise (Home, 1970, p.vi), could also be seen as recognition that in the dominant rhetorical dynamics of the constitutional debate, the Conservatives are increasingly sidelined. Home’s distancing can be seen in this context as a defence of relevance. Lang and Henderson also note the inclusion on the Home Committee of “some distinguished figures outside of the Conservative Party” (1975, p.9). Indeed, Lang and Henderson offer a more extreme example of conventional acceptance, and implicitly employ a number of tropes noted above. Written against the backdrop of the October 1974 General Election, they indicate that Conservatives need to reassert their ‘Scottish-ness’, and the paper asserts its purpose as taking “a first tentative step towards discerning, against the backdrop of political history in Scotland a distinctive brand of Conservatism” (1975, p.2). This suggests there is not already such a distinctive brand, a view reinforced by a historical account which outlines Tory association with the pre-1832 ‘managed’ Scottish

political system and the party's 'high church' misunderstanding of "the unacceptability to Presbyterian eyes of the subordination of church to state" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.4) which helped establish Scottish Liberal dominance: "[i]n the history of the political parties since 1832 there has been no major occurrence, no watershed, no intrinsically Scottish political event that might have precipitated the development of a distinctly Scottish Conservatism" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.1).<sup>152</sup> Even Conservative dominance from the late nineteenth century until the 1950s is dismissed as resulting from the 1886 Liberal party split over home rule, and Liberals suffering at the hands of "Scots born Labour": indeed, "[n]either event imposed a stamp on the party that was thereafter to distinguish it from the English Conservatives" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.8).

Lang and Henderson's explanation for Conservative decline accepts tropes outlined above. Scotland is asserted to have a larger self-described working class than England and they assert the need for 'distinctive Scottish overtones', policies and to recognise when UK policies counter Scottish interests (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.17): for example, on regional policy, "[t]he reversal of the centralisation that saddles Scotland with a 'branch plant' economy" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.18), mirroring concerns discussed within the discourse community. Despite implicit acceptance of Conservative marginalisation the document outlines the development of Conservative organisation, emphasising throughout the Scottish element, proclaiming Conservative responsibility for much of Scotland's administrative devolution and Conservative principles of diffusion of power (Lang &

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<sup>152</sup> This is contrary to later assessments, which tend to emphasise indigenous Scottish 'Unionism' as a distinctive marker of the Scottish Conservative tradition. See, for example, Mitchell, 1990; Seawright, 1999.

Henderson, 1975, p.9). Such techniques are often used to assert 'Scottishness', but here such implicit identity invocation contradicts the explicit observation of the lack of 'distinctive' Scottish Conservatism. This disjuncture could indicate an implicit recognition of the party's apparent rhetorical marginalisation, or at least failure to make more of the rhetoric of Scottishness. The "price of procrastination" in not implementing Home (1970) is that people have forgotten that "it was the Tories who had first developed the whole concept of a Scottish assembly" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, pp.9-10). The result is "incredible" as the 'party of devolution' is perceived to be "centralising, controlling Labour led in Scotland by Willie Ross, (over whose dead body he once swore devolutionaries would have to cross)" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.10), rather than the Conservatives, "the party of pluralism, diffusion of power and effective administration" (Lang & Henderson, 1975, p.10).

## **§8. Conclusion.**

The creation of the discourse community is the ideological outcome of the Scottish constitutional debate between 1967 and 1979. Constructed by a distinct set of interlocutors, identifiable through a number of contributions to that debate and created through development of shared conventions and references building on the rhetorical tropes of the wider debate. Because of the ideological location of the interlocutors and how these interactions occurred across the main partisan division of the debate, conceptions of working class and socialist Scotland were employed and reinforced through strategic interaction. While obscured by partisan dynamics, through this process dialogue between

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socialism and nationalism is observable. Radicalism is invoked by contributors in this dialogue and positively evaluated by all sides, potentially as a synthesis, but certainly a number of contributors identify this with a distinctive tradition of Scottish socialism, although differing over how to interpret this tradition in partisan terms. Importantly, this is an ideological development, and must be understood in those terms: to this extent, the use and usefulness of intellectual history to study periods of political change is justified. A conceptualisation of Scotland as ‘left wing’ Scotland, outlined in Chapter Three, can now be seen as an ideological outcome constructed within the discourse community through the Scottish constitutional debate. Foster’s account and elision of class with nation; attempts to locate the debate in a radical tradition; to portray the debate as explained by an association of Scottishness and social democracy and a defence of the latter; and marginalisation of Scottish Conservatism, are outcomes of the debate that require understanding in terms of the debate’s ideological development. Broader implications of the thesis for the historiography of the period, for political science focused on Scotland and for contemporary understanding of Scottish politics will be discussed in the Conclusion.

## **Conclusion.**

The Scottish constitutional debate created the ideological context of contemporary Scottish politics. We view the past through the present it created. While the constitutional debate would continue for a number of years, later developments built on intellectual foundations laid in the pre-1979 period and so understanding the intellectual transformations of the earlier period is necessary for a proper historical understanding not only of the Scottish constitutional debate as a whole, but also of the underlying ideological context of present Scottish politics.<sup>153</sup> Understanding this indicates the need to take ideas and ideological change seriously and the necessity of a methodology to refocus the potentially reifying and distorting lens of the present. This conclusion reviews the implications of this thesis's documentary analysis and methodological standpoint.

## **Historiographical Implications.**

Chapter Three outlined three aspects of current understandings of the constitutional debate which are challenged by the implications of this thesis's methodological stance and the conceptualisation of the discourse community: that the debate should be understood as one of identity change; that the period is often explained in a way which prioritises socio-economic explanations; and that there is a conception of the substance of Scottish identity

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<sup>153</sup> In terms of new additions to the later debate, Chapter Two pointed to the apparent disparity between the early debate structured primarily around partisan dynamics and the latter debate's increasing concentration on the involvement of 'civil society' through such organisations as the Scottish Constitutional Convention. As noted, however, this emphasis was not itself without partisan effects, if not motives.



as 'left wing', which is utilised as historical explanation as well as an account of current Scottish political attitudes.

### **A Contingent Identity Narrative.**

Chapter Three highlighted the common narrative account of a decline of British identity associated with the 'end of empire' and the seeming replacement of this with a primarily Scottish identity, illustrating an understanding of the debate as constituting identity change. That this conceptualisation is still present can be seen in Paterson's argument that "the main reason that the strongest emotions have been on the side of home rule since the early 1980s has probably been, simply, that Scottish culture has shifted its allegiance wholesale from straightforward Unionism to a much greater ambivalence" (1998a, pp.5-6). He further posits a "cultural revolt against the idea of Britain" (1998a, p.6). Two aspects of this identity element of the dominant historiography were highlighted. Firstly, that this account ran the risk of presenting identity change as a natural linear development, a risk recognised by both Colley and Morton and Morris. Secondly, it was suggested that this account was potentially founded on the backdating of currently perceived distinctions between British and Scottish identity.

That the debate did have implications for identity is not questioned but rather reinforced by the documentary analysis, as Chapter Four demonstrated. However, the linear account of identity change requires modification on a number of counts in the light of the documentary analysis. Firstly, the process through which the debate reinforces and adds to

central aspects of Scottish previously banal nationalism, or Scotland's societal ideology, needs to be more thoroughly appreciated. Scotland's 'institutional nationalism' in particular is reinforced and partially conditions the debate, while the debate itself becomes a central aspect of Scotland's societal ideological.

Secondly, the analysis suggests that rather than a clear decline in 'Britishness', and its replacement by 'Scottishness', there is an evolution through the debate of the ideological context that supports identity in Scotland. This does suggest that Scottishness and Britishness are interlinked and cautions against a simple transactional account of the identity dynamics of the period. Therefore, to the extent that Morton conceptualises British identity within Scotland as an entwined part of Scottish identity rather than an overarching and distinct but complementary identity, as Colley argues, Morton's conceptualisation emphasises an important aspect of identity in Scotland. A corollary of this, however, is that assuming Scottishness and Britishness were in the past as distinct as they are perceived to be today is misleading, and any investigation must start from the documents and ideological context of the time. Nevertheless, while this aspect of Morton is reinforced by the documentary analysis, due to its purely Scottish focus, this thesis cannot either endorse or refute Morton's assertion that British identity is different in each of the constituent nations of the UK or Colley's contrasting conceptualisation.

However, insofar as Morton's conceptualisation of identity *change* tends towards a conceptualisation of the relationship of Scottish and British elements of identity within Scotland as transactional, this is questioned. As a simple transactional account of identity

change is dismissed, the analysis also questions the main narrative with which this was associated in Chapter Three. Although the 'decline of empire' thesis is evident in a number of documents, this is clearly not dominant and was contested by a number of contributions. This does not mean, in retrospect, that such a narrative has nothing to recommend it. However, that this contested interpretation has become predominant suggests that it is an *outcome* of ideological debate, rather than an incontestable account of events. Given that this is an outcome of ideological debate, the exigencies of partisanship and the interaction of defined and located persons in a concrete process, this outcome is contingent rather than explanatory. To treat this account as unproblematically explanatory, therefore, does backdate an outcome of the debate and obscures the process through which the ideological context of the present was created. This was the process through which the discourse community was created, and diffused a particular vision of Scotland as a left wing nation, in contradistinction to England.

Lastly, highlighting the contingency of the period's ideological changes is a valuable modification to this historiographical account. The process through which the constitutional debate publicises and develops a pre-existing Scottish identity is partisan debate, primarily between Labour and the SNP, although tropes and conventions developed across this rhetorical division were diffused within the constitutional discourse. This is more contingent than historiographical accounts outlined in Chapter Three suggest and reinforces Colley and Morton and Morris's warnings about writing history as linear progression. An intellectual history approach highlights and examines this contingency and provides a more concrete analysis of the changes that did occur.

The Scottish Constitutional Debate 1967 - 1979  
**Economic Explanations and Partisan Debate.**

The second aspect of the dominant historiography highlighted in Chapter Three was a concentration on socio-economic, particularly economic, explanations. In this account SNP support is explained as either economic protest or motivated by economic discontent, reinforced by the SNP's focus on economic factors. That the SNP is the form this protest takes, which stimulates the constitutional debate. Oil is seen as reinforcing this process and contributing credibility to an SNP case, with this process centralising the economy within the debate.

Chapter Three did note some doubts as to whether economic explanations are entirely adequate to explain the debate and the documentary analysis reinforces such doubts by illustrating that the central role of the economy in the debate is, at least partly, due to the effects of the pre-existing partisan dynamics of the constitutional debate, rather than the cause of those dynamics. The economy becomes central within the debate rather than motivating that debate. The constitutional debate initially concentrated on the explicit topic of Scotland's constitutional position and the application of democratic principles. Due to the way that the evaluative debate over nationalism, instituted through the partisan dynamics between Labour and the SNP, evolved the economy increasingly became central. This is the result of who was debating and that debate's partisan dynamics. Indeed, as Chapter Six demonstrates, the economy is often utilised in place of political arguments rather than addressing any specifically economic divisions. Within the context of these

debate dynamics, oil merely reinforces rhetorical and ideological transformations already underway within the debate.

Important within any account of the increased concentration on economic factors are the ideological transformations associated with such a change rather than ideology being perceived purely as the result of the external economic factors. Thus, the documentary analysis demonstrated that Labour/SNP partisan dynamics were important in reorienting the debate towards an economic focus. The SNP, forced to respond to partisan attacks focused predominantly on economic aspects of the case for independence, also move strategically to economic ground. The SNP, therefore, do not merely represent a straightforwardly economic protest vote to which the other parties are responding. The dynamics outlined in Chapters Four, Five, and Six are more complex. This is not to deny that some people did vote strategically for the SNP. As Chapter Three indicated there is contemporaneous survey data which demonstrates this; indeed MacCormick explicitly admitted being uncertain about the SNP's central policy of independence but supporting the SNP to stimulate the other parties to grant Scottish self-government (1970, p.2). However, the analysis does suggest both that this cannot be taken as a full account of the role of the SNP, and that the SNP's effects may be unrelated to the reasons for their success.

The economic context of the debate does no doubt have some explanatory role: clearly concerns over economic factors were utilised by all parties within the debate. However, the documentary analysis cautions against an over concentration on this in contrast to other

factors and illustrates the importance and explanatory value of tracing the ideological changes of the debate. This leads to a perhaps more complex account, but also to a more accurate understanding of the dynamics of the debate and the outcomes that underlie modern Scottish politics.

### **Left wing Scotland.**

The last aspect of the dominant socio-economic historiography addressed was based on a commonly voiced perception of contemporary Scotland as a left wing nation, and a higher self-identification of Scots as working class. An association of class and nation is found explicitly in Foster (2001), who ultimately claims working class Scotland is the 'real Scotland' and emphasises the strength of left wing political forces in Scotland, and in a more moderate form in Hassan and Warhurst (2002) who claim that working class self identification represents a more working class influenced culture. McCrone posits Scotland's societal ideology as a mediating mechanism between structure and action such that, though there are general left wing attitudes throughout the UK, these acquire a different meaning in Scotland where nation and class tend to reinforce each other. Assertions of left wing Scotland can build on egalitarian interpretations of the Scottish myth, often located in a radical narrative such as Fraser (2000). Building on quantitative social scientific surveys of current Scottish political attitudes that show a social democratic societal ideology, a number of accounts, it was suggested, backdate modern conceptions of Scotland's societal ideology and ideological distinctiveness as explanation of the debate. Such accounts, building upon the identity change narrative and extending the economic

motivation narrative, conceptualise the debate as a defence of social democracy, the welfare state and welfare state resources.

As Chapter Seven demonstrated, this conception of Scotland as possessing a left wing societal ideology is an outcome of the successful diffusion of a conception developed through the creation of a discourse community in the latter part of the debate. A combination of the centralisation of the economy and the partisan dynamics over the main rhetorical division of the debate leads to the creation of a community of interlocutors who interact through the development of a number of conventional understandings: the elision of class and national identities; the tendency to understand Scottish politics in class terms; an extension of this to an understanding of Scotland as more socialist/left wing, leading to both the rhetorical exclusion of Conservatism and an elision of nationalism (broadly conceived) and socialism, united within a self-perceived Scottish ‘radical’ tradition. Therefore, a strong case can be made that the conception of left wing Scotland is, again, the outcome of a contingent partisan debate.

This thesis agrees with Donnachie and Whatley, after Fry, that “de-mythologising and removing some of the worst romantic excesses from Scottish history is not, or should not be, the same thing as denying distinctive features of Scottish society, or more importantly the much less tangible facts of Scottish nationhood” (1992, pp.12-13). This thesis does not deny that Scotland’s societal ideology is distinctive nor, indeed, that it is predominantly ‘left wing’. Indeed, the documentary analysis reinforces distinctiveness and illustrates how the precise form of that distinctiveness emerged. Although it is beyond the purview of this

thesis, this would be reinforced after 1979, as a documentary analysis of the debate in the 1980s and 1990s would doubtless show. The long period of Conservative government 1979-1997; the transition of the SNP to a more developed left wing position through first the influence within the SNP of the '79 Group, formed after the 1979 referendum to create such a left wing SNP position, and later the rise of a number of members to high profile SNP leadership positions (most notably Alex Salmond, National Convenor 1990–2000); the more explicit development of an anti-Conservative alliance in the 1990s; and the co-option of civil society to the devolutionary cause, conceived in terms of opposition to Thatcherite Conservatism, would all reinforce this conception of left wing Scotland.

Nevertheless, there are benefits to understanding the process through which this perception developed through the creation of the discourse community, given that after the period examined in this thesis this perception of Scotland did achieve dominance. As McCrone notes, understanding identity discursively “we begin to see that it cannot be taken for granted, that it will reflect social power, and that competing identities will emerge and challenge each other” (1998, p.30). Discourses both reflect and constrain relations between interlocutors within those discourses. As Baker notes, a community is constituted by a common discourse that structures claim-making and therefore political authority can be seen as “linguistic authority” (1990, pp.17-18). However, as Pocock avers:



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“[w]hile we may think of them as having the character of paradigms in that they operate so as to structure thought and speech in certain ways and to preclude their being structured in others, we may not describe...[discourses] as paradigms if the term implies that preclusion has been successfully affected...some languages succeed in driving out others; nonetheless political discourse is typically polyglot” (1987, p.21).

In Scotland the conceptualisation of the nation developed through the creation of the discourse community could be seen as having achieved such paradigmatic status in the sense of driving out other potential accounts and discourses. As Cairns Craig notes:

“too often in Scotland, a particular way of seeing our culture, of representing ourselves, has come to dominate our perception because it has gone unchallenged – worse, unexamined. The vitality of the culture should be measured by the intensity of debate which it generates rather than the security of ideas on which it rests, and should be measured by the extent to which creative, philosophical, traditional, critical and political ideas confront each other” (Donnachie & Whatley, (eds.), 1992, series preface).

The primary benefit of an intellectualist account is that it demonstrates the way that discourses achieve dominance and alerts us to their contingency. Useful in understanding this process is the notion of the discourse community as an ontological tool for understanding the effects of discursive interaction. The ‘relevance’ of understanding the

rhetorical and discursive construction of contemporary identities and perspectives is constituted by:

“[t]he alien character of the beliefs we uncover...Reflecting on such alternative possibilities, we provide ourselves with one of the best means of preventing our current moral and political theories from degenerating too easily into uncritically accepted ideologies. At the same time, we equip ourselves with a new means of looking critically at our own beliefs in the light of the enlarged sense of possibility we acquire” (Skinner, 2002a, p.126).

An intellectual history approach provides a way of not only understanding ideological transformations within a concrete period and context but also their contingency, how they were shaped by and how they shape linguistic interaction and power relations.

To Wood, “the quest for a left wing nationalism was one which naturally arose out of the way the devolution–nationalism issue had been able to cut across the usual left right cleavages in Scottish politics” (1989, p.121). However, this statement should be modified somewhat. This development was not natural, in the sense that the debate could have prioritised different issues and divisions, but was the outcome of the contingent rhetorical and partisan dynamics and their interactions with events and personalities, as outlined. This development was also not wholly intentional, in so far as it was the outcome of a dynamic inter-subjective process. Nevertheless, the outcome is an ideological consensus within the discourse community, and the diffusion of one particular view of Scotland and ideological

context that could be called a ‘mythic’ identity. The role of myth in national identity has been discussed in Chapter Two. Myth provides a shorthand view of the nation that says something about the nation to its members. ‘Myth-making’ often involves a particular reading of the text of history. The transformation of the societal ideological context affects national identity and provides the supportive myths upon which that identity is based. To Donnachie and Whatley, Scottish history:

“is important. It gives us as individuals and as members of Scottish society a vital sense of where we are and how we got here. It could be said to set the context for a clearer understanding of the present, helping explain the contemporary scene – political, social, economic and cultural” (1992, p.1).

Houston and Knox similarly assert that “[h]istory makes a people. Yet it is also true that every nation makes its own history”, including historical invention and selection (2001, p.xix). Such myths can have positive effects and, indeed, “[a]rguably a few myths about Scottish history may be even more important in shaping history and in facilitating action than any amount of historical fact: but myth can also lead to self delusion” (Houston & Knox, 2001, p.xiv). Fry similarly implies a distinction between good and bad myths, in terms of how myths serve to preserve Scottish identity:

“[t]he making of myths is not necessarily a bad thing. Those made by the Scots of the early nineteenth century helped to distil the complexity of the real world as they sought to advance themselves without sacrificing their identity. In interplay with other forces, the myths did...shape history by defining which choices could be consistent with the national spirit and which not. But the making of myths can also obfuscate reality” (1987, p.4).

Such distinctions tend to make value judgements between versions of Scottish history. Thus, Pittock notes the failure of Conservative attempts to reassert ‘Unionist Patriotism’, through, for example, Michael Forsyth (Secretary of State for Scotland, 1995-1997) wearing a kilt to the premier of *Braveheart*. To Pittock, this indicated that “Walter Scott’s linkage of emotional patriotism to unconditional unionism was no longer operational...there was increasing evidence of an appetite for *the substance of history, not merely its shadow*” (1999, p.124; my italics). He links this desire for historical substance to the rise of Scottishness, although cautions against underestimating the strength of Britishness, which “remains seriously underestimated by nationalist commentators” (1999, p.141) However, *all* myths or ideologies ‘obfuscate reality’ in that they structure it in one way rather than another. As Pick notes, discourses determine how one views the world and the location from which one views the world inevitably leaves ‘blind spots’:

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“[t]he history which a discourse ‘sites’ (the pun is not superfluous for this certainly includes a selection process of seeing, positioning and refining the past) will bear traces of antecedents, but will also be founded upon the rejected, and distillation of other conceptions and narratives. Discourses are historical but generate different versions of what history means” (1987, p.10).

Drawing attention to the contingency of the dominant perception of Scotland underlying contemporary politics is itself valuable. As the creation of an ideological context is an ideological act, appreciating the dynamics involved necessitates an intellectual history approach and the conceptual tool of the discourse community is useful in understanding the ideological transformation that occurred through the Scottish constitutional debate 1967-1979, illustrating the process through which a particular conception of Scotland was constructed.

In addition, as a Skinnerian approach emphasises, “ideas presuppose agents” and do not “get up and do battle on their own” (Skinner, 1988a, p.35). As well as discourse community development prioritising a particular conceptualisation of Scotland, this process of inclusion and exclusion can also be seen to illustrate the beginning of the formation of a political class who share this conceptualisation and, conversely, exclude others. Thus, discourse community development has relevance not merely for understanding the historical/intellectual underpinnings of contemporary politics but also the present political class and the possibilities for political authority or, which Baker argues is the same, ‘linguistic authority’, in contemporary Scottish politics.

**New Politics? Politics and Scottish Democracy.**

Chapter Three suggested that the methodological perspective of this thesis also contributes to political science perspectives on Scotland's place within the Union and our understanding of Scottish politics. In terms of the former, a disagreement between Mitchell and Paterson was noted over the extent of Scottish autonomy within the UK. Mitchell states that, while the UK union state allows some autonomy, Paterson overestimates the extent of this by devaluing the meaning of the term 'autonomy' to administrative implementation and by underestimating the importance of Parliamentary Sovereignty. Of course, to the extent that the union state is, by definition, one state, there is a limit to the amount of autonomy possible. However, this does not mean that Paterson's account cannot be made compatible with Mitchell's. The other important aspect of the union state is the retention of distinct institutions and privileges preserved according to the terms of state creation. It was suggested in Chapter Three that how institutions are operated and perceived is affected by the ideological context within which they operate and so Scottish politics can appear more or less different than politics in the rest of the UK, as Paterson's illustrates. Therefore, an examination of changes in the ideological context of Scotland is important in understanding the process of Scotland's changing place within the UK, emphasising and taking seriously the flexibility of the union state concept.

To the extent that the process of ideological transformation illustrated through the documentary analysis constructed a concept of Scotland both distinct to Scotland and associated with a particular ideological location, it is also likely to have altered the

perceived relationship of Scotland to the institutions of the union state. As noted in Chapter Three, many recent accounts of the constitutional debate see a reaction against the policies of Margaret Thatcher and a defence of welfare state values. Hassan argues that within this context the “post-1979 left have reclaimed nationalism as their own, redefining earlier traditions and intertwining the politics of self-government and identity” (1999b, p.19). However, such a conceptualisation builds on the ideological changes outlined in this thesis as occurring pre-1979. Therefore, a transformation in the perceived relationship of Scotland to the state builds upon contingent ideological transformations that structure the context within which the institutions of the union state operate.

As well as aiding our understanding of the dynamics of the union state, an appreciation of the contingency of the ideological context that provides the basis of contemporary politics enables a more critical view of current Scottish politics. For example, the assertion that Scotland is a left wing nation is found in much commentary on Scottish politics, both academic and journalistic. Thus, Hassan, reviewing the 1999-2000 political year, asserts that “Scotland is a social democratic country with numerous contradictions and complexities. There is a social democratic consensus but within it there are all kinds of tensions” (17/07/2000); and Fraser asserts that “[t]hanks to a reformed electoral system the result is a new Scottish Parliament with no single political party commanding an overall majority, but with all using some of that Scottish radical discourse inherited from the past” (2000, p.xi). Such conceptions of Scotland as a ‘radical’ country could be seen to be responsible for the unrealistically high expectations with which the new Scottish Parliament had to contend from its inception. Recognition that this conception is itself an

ideological construct could lead to a more realistic assessment of the Parliament and its potentialities.

For example, Chapter Five illustrated a series of underlying evaluative agreements on central democratic concepts reinforced through the partisan debate, but that these are inflected and obscured by partisan divisions. One interpretation of the implications of this is that there is a need to remove the partisanship and draw out the obscured elements of consensus. The concept of 'New Politics', as propounded by many proponents of constitutional change, often appears to imply just such a process. Peter Lynch places this conception of 'new politics' as central to the current devolution process (2001, p.2), defined in opposition to the 'old politics' of Westminster. Thus, 'new politics' is often contrasted with adversarial partisanship associated with Westminster. Lynch further notes that "[t]he wider democratic agenda evident in the 1980s, with consensus politics, civic engagement and consultative practices were entirely absent from the 1970s proposals" (2001, p.11). A common assertion in Scottish political discourse today is, indeed, that the Scottish parliament should be understood as a radical break from the past. This is clearly implied in the title of Watson's *Year Zero*.<sup>154</sup> Hassan asserts that 1999 was "an historic year for Scotland – the end of one era and the beginning of a new one defined by opportunity, optimism and looking to the future" (1999a, p.7), more open and transparent and allowing "us the chance to make a new politics more at home with pluralism,

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<sup>154</sup> Watson M (2001), *Year Zero: an Insider's View of The Scottish Parliament*, Edinburgh: Polygon at Edinburgh. (Lord) Mike Watson was a Labour MSP (1999-2005), is a Member of the House of Lords and former MP. Watson was forced to resign as an MSP in 2005 after his conviction for public endangerment, after attempting to start a fire in an Edinburgh hotel.



inclusiveness and cooperation than the old, outdated adversarial structures, a politics more in touch with Scottish needs and opinions” (1999, p.7). This rather nebulous and undefined concept of ‘new politics’ has emerged as either a descriptor or normative aim of post devolution Scottish politics. ‘New politics’ has, indeed, been given implicit academic endorsement by, as well as Lynch, titles such as *New Scotland, New Politics?* (Paterson et al, 2001), although perhaps tempered by the question mark, and Hassan and Warhurst (eds.), (1999) *The New Scottish Politics: The First Year of the Scottish Parliament and Beyond*.

To the extent that the concept of new politics is often related to specific institutional innovations such as proportional representation or a symbolic semicircular debating chamber, when the creation of an assembly seemed inevitable in the late 1970s, such ideas were also discussed and the contrast with Westminster was made, as Chapter Five illustrated. More fully, to the extent that ‘new politics’ is premised on a shared conception of a social democratic nation, this builds upon the ideological changes traced through this thesis’s documentary analysis. The contingency of this conceptualisation should warn against accepting claims of ‘new politics’ uncritically. Mitchell defines consensus as “a set of parameters which...[bound] the set of policy options regarded...as administratively practicable, economically affordable and politically acceptable” and warns that claims of consensus can represent propaganda and “conservatism dressed up in more alluring garb” (1999, p.28). He suggests that claims of consensus can reflect as much a search for legitimacy as for democracy (1999, p. 28) by a negative anti-conservative coalition and, indeed, asks whether a concept of ‘democratic consensus’ can make sense. Pittock

illustrates Mitchell's point in noting that the involvement of prominent Scottish civil society figures within the Scottish Constitutional Convention:

“formed a useful camouflage for the development of Labour Party ideas to which the Liberals would be bound. These would form the bases of the so-called ‘new politics’, where consensus brought about by the stifling of debate (for the convention did not effectively consider a reconstructed union, federalism or independence as options on which the Scottish people would even be *allowed* to decide) would be regarded as a good in itself, reinforcing Labour hegemony in Scotland while claiming the moral high ground of universal agreement and reinforcing Labour’s claim to be the patriotic party. The SNP’s withdrawal from the convention anticipated the limited and consensual nature of its remit and the party was roundly criticised for it by a Scottish media used to printing Labour press releases as exclusives” (2001, p.127)

This account, whilst demonstrating the author’s biases, indicates the contingency of such ideological constructs as left wing Scotland or ‘new politics’, and that they are often based on (rhetorical) exclusion and (discursive) discrimination. An intellectual history approach illustrates how such constructs are developed.

The second potential response to the perception of underlying evaluative agreement on democratic concepts obscured by partisan disagreement, rather than seeking to overcome partisanship, is to recognise that partisan divisions are inescapable within the political sphere even where underlying evaluative agreement is evident; and that it is only through

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partisan interaction that any real, rather than imposed, consensus is attainable, to the extent that consensus is desirable. Any democracy requires an underlying ideological context supportive of democracy. Nevertheless, the form of this ideological context is also contestable, and should be recognised as contingent and constantly (re)negotiated. This contestation is the product, ideally, of democratic debate and partisan interaction. As Pittock argues, in this sense high expectations for the Scottish Parliament contradict the desire for consensus expressed in terms of new politics (2001, p.147). Scotland needs, rather, to recognise and appreciate that a central part of politics is that:

“[t]he principles governing our moral and political life have generally been disputed in a manner more reminiscent of the battlefield than the seminar room (or perhaps the moral is that seminar rooms are really battlefields)...What the historical record strongly suggests is that no one is above the battle because the battle is all there is” (Skinner, 2002a, p.7).

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